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JOSEPH REMENYI

The Meaning of World Literature

I

While traditional values seem to be thrown into a universal bankruptcy court, and the *pro bono publico* policy of many governments seems like an ironic appeal to man's reason and unreasonableness, one justly wonders what is the meaning of world literature in such a world. There are those who take a hostile position toward it without the slightest concept of its purpose; others see in world literature the utmost benefit for humanity, but their approach to the subject is sentimental, that is to say, uncritical. Among pedants it is not uncommon to judge the impact of world literature on the human mind with the infallibility of immoderately used footnotes. To assume that an insistence on an army of footnotes will defend the creative spirit against its futility is clearly wrong. The avalanche of "best sellers" does not add to the prestige of world literature. The Olympian detachment of certain critics from the fantasies or vulgarities of printed matter that rarely matters is comprehensible, as such works generally possess only documentary significance in a psychological or sociological sense; their aesthetic merit is nil. The rumpus and fanfare of publicity stunts for the popularization of plays and fiction whose "worth" should be taken with a grain of salt seems like a ceaseless war of bad taste against good taste. The therapeutic or anaesthetic effect of cheap or mediocre works cannot be denied; it is a kind of quackcure for insensitive neurotics. But world literature as conceived by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (the term was coined by him) and the aim of the writer who, as Miguel de Cervantes stated, writes primarily not with his pen, but with understanding, is seldom comprehended by the overwhelming majority

of readers and theatre and movie audiences. In fact, the excessive praise which some of so-called "literary" works receive for utilitarian reasons or for lack of critical competence plays directly into the hands of those who contend that the sale of books and the box-office success should be considered as decisive factors in the evaluation of "creative" expression. This quantitative standard, accepted by people who otherwise stress elemental decency in human relationship, is, of course, detrimental to the proper appraisal of the creative spirit. The fact remains that the meaning of world literature is important, and that indifference to it in this polyphonic world of ours is identical with indifference to rhythm, form, and order.

As a rule the average man shrinks from a philosophical or imaginative interpretation of his existence. He adheres to a few simple views or doctrines; or he allows his spirit to be drugged by slogans; or is suspicious, i.e. silently slanderous of values. To seek in "common sense," as it is applied today, the key to the secret of comprehension would be useless indeed. Then there are those who have a "messianic" disposition. They are attached fanatically to fantastic convictions or prejudices, or are clinging stubbornly to well-sounding phrases. Their solace seems to be mental and moral platitudes. Considering the inherent imperfection of man and considering environmental complications and inanities it is not surprising that Socrates' "know thyself" seems outside the domain of realization. Man's defective sensibility plus his pressing obligations and the tension of the human struggle explain his habit to settle by a few catchwords or external activities the ethical, metaphysical, social, and aesthetic issues of life.

However, there are individuals, savants, scientists, creators, who—despite periods infiltered with tyrannical injustice, hypocritical indignation, and insane ruthlessness—do not accept as final the incoherent features of life. Several tangible and intangible forces combine for the development of their personality.

Born out of the desire to remain alive, and facing the world, they too resort to the typical defense mechanism of man and cannot evade the duties and strategies of the commonplace. They too have to earn their daily bread, to seek adjustment to the seemingness of things. Sometimes they entertain false notions about pragmatic patterns and devices. Like Montaigne, they may believe that man conquers by enduring, but they know that in an absolute sense only the hero of a tragedy is a nonconformist; this is the paramount reason of his tragic fate. In spite of the humdrum battle for survival (from which not even the recluse can withdraw), there are individuals who have the will and perseverance to throw off the yoke of existential slavery. They create life while life tries to use and abuse them. They do not worship at the shrine of material necessities, although they do not deny their reality. What stands out from their endeavors is the rhythmic consistency of an organically authentic point of view which serves as a virtual ultimatum to the incomprehensibility and drabness of the human struggle. Regardless of whether they portray the human struggle in a favorable or unfavorable light, in principle and in fact they symbolize the gentle or heroic pursuit of the human spirit for a meaningful existence. They are not the dilettanti of existence, neither the condottieri of mercenary adventures. It is idle to accuse them of self-deception. As creators—in this instance as creators of literary works—they represent man's resistance against the destructive forces of negation. If really great, they are the contemporaries of all ages. They compel the human planet of the universe to radiate purpose. Of course, they are not in the possession of all knowledge, but they are in the possession of that knowledge which seems out of reach for the exclusively "practical" man, although it is related to his spiritual and social Odyssey.

It is of secondary importance whether the creator seems a medium of divination, as Vergil seemed in the vernacular of

medieval scholars, or whether his psychological attributes are acclaimed, as in the case of Stendhal, or whether, like Walt Whitman, he is considered a humanitarian. The important thing is that in their particular fashion these creators wrestle with their conscience, and this inward and outward fight with the knowable and unknowable records man's fundamental relationship to human destiny. Man swayed and ruled by passion and self-interest is prone to wallow in his own confusion. It is the creative writer and poet who as an artist is unwilling or unable to compromise with the inevitable, and thus, living in a God or man-centered world, urged by an irrepressible sense of proportion, produces unity in variety. He "must" do this, as Rainer Maria Rilke remarked. In imitating life, he shapes it into significant form. It is the latter process that differentiates the creative person from the non-creative person.

II

In order to understand the meaning of world literature it is necessary first to discuss the meaning of literature in general. Literature is a creatively expressed imaginative interpretation or recreation of life. The term "life" may be conceived as that of an individual (the writer or poet himself), as an objective expression or refusal of the will on a universal level (in a Schopenhauerian sense), or as a metaphysical, moral, philosophical, social, psychological, political or economic experience, affected by surroundings, time, ethnic factors, and the challenge of the "moment" (as stated by Hyppolite Taine). As has been repeatedly observed, in essence creativeness is the psychologically plausible and technically possible realization of the relation between the self and the object the self is interested in. The ultimate objective is aesthetic pleasure, that may suggest disinterestedness, as pointed out by Immanuel Kant, or answer the need of our play impulse, as suggested by Friedrich Schiller and Herbert Spencer; it may also be purposeless, as Heinrich

Heine stated; it may offer catharsis in an Aristotelian sense, or give, according to Horace, instruction through delight. Its paradoxical honesty—as if the creator were a maker of lies—of which Saint Augustine speaks; or our ability to participate in life organically through literature, of which S. T. Coleridge and the Schlegel Brothers speak, especially with reference to poetry, thus vindicating the supremacy of feeling, instinct, and imagination over ideas; or its importance in relationship to prophetic ideas and romantic ideals, which Ralph Waldo Emerson stressed, is indicative of the substantially eclectic character of literature. According to August Comte's positivism and Carl Marx's class concept literature is a social agent. Sigmund Freud declares that literature seeks illusion, a substitute experience. Miguel de Unamuno "preferred books that talk like men to men who talk like books." George Santayana writes that "arts have their dates; and the great question is not what age you live in or what art you pursue, but what perfection you can achieve in that art under those circumstances." It is needless to say that by art he means literature too. Albert Guerard, Sr., says "a great writer is first of all himself and not a blurred composite picture of his generation." For Cleanth Brooks poetry is "the organization of experience," for Allen Tate "the most intense mode of utterance, a configuration of meaning," and according to a recent eulogistic article written about Jules Laforgue, the nineteenth century French symbolist, poetry is an experience in "cosmic anxiety." Obviously, I could enumerate other views which, however, would not change the fact of unavoidable relativity and empiricism in ideology and taste, notwithstanding the striving for the narcissistic absolute in such creators as Stephane Mallarmé and Paul Valéry.

Despite relativism and Protean empiricism, by which I mean contradictions and manifoldedness in knowledge, sensibility, and self-interest, it is imperative to acknowledge certain postulates, certain general rules of literature. Such postulates are

subjective: they are the criteria I use in the evaluation of literary works. I do not pretend originality, as these rules echo creators and critics of the past who tried to reduce critical principles to their essentials. Subjectivity is not mere impressionism; not only emotion, the ingredient of impressionistic criticism, but principles, too, define critical validity. Now what are the necessary postulates of literary criticism?

a) To detect the creator's intention, and the quality of his intention.

b) To recognize his integrity or lack of integrity, in other words to observe his artistic honesty or his pretence. There is a difference between pretence as aesthetic deception and the mask of the creator as a manner of expression.

c) To discern the horizon of his ability, the quality of his verbal imagination and technical skill. Of course, one must differentiate between narrative, dramatic and lyrical talent or genius, but fundamentally in each instance these criteria should be applied.

d) To take a realistic view of the truth that there are no fixed canons applicable to literature. It is impossible in some cases to make an unequivocal statement. Neither an inductive or analytical, nor a dialectical or speculative approach seems of much help. After all, literary history is the history of changing rules and theories.

e) It has been stated often that there is no immoral writing, only bad writing, and I am in full accordance with this view. There are immoral persons who write, but there is no immoral art. Francois Villon, Edgar Allan Poe, Arthur Rimbaud and others lived what is sometimes called an irresponsible life, but the sum total of their being is their literary work. Their irresponsibility is a marginal experience of psychological and biographical, at times sociological and historical significance.

f) I believe that the creator should be judged by the uniqueness of his personality realized through his work, regardless

of whether he is a classicist, romanticist, realist, naturalist, or experimentalist.

g) Art for art's sake does not mean immorality or amorality, but a refusal of that which is aesthetically immoral or amoral. For example, it rejects certain formless reflections and acts. The principle of art for art's sake includes criticism of life. This criticism is manifested in the attitude of the writer or poet, or in things he is silent about. When Charles Baudelaire remarked that he did not like nature, and that he did not wish to kneel before vegetables, he rejected Rousseau's optimism about nature and not the fragrance of a rose.

h) There is reciprocal relation between the various vehicles and tendencies of creative expression. Therefore it seems valid to compare literary realism with impressionism in painting (Jens Peter Jacobsen with Claude Monet), poetic symbolism with a similar trend in music (Paul Verlaine with Claude Debussy), or literary cubism with cubism on the canvas (Guillaume Apollinaire with Pablo Picasso). One should not ignore the *Zeitgeist* (Spirit of the Age) in creative utterances; at the same time one should accentuate the relationship of timeliness to timelessness. For example, one can approve of a literary work in a historical perspective, yet refute its merit in the light of aesthetic criticism, or approve of the writer's ability to reflect the "milieu," but condemn his datedness.

i) A scientific approach to literature is justified, but I do not believe that psychology or any other scientific approach suffices for the right evaluation of letters. There is a plus; the term *Einfühlung* (empathy), coined for such purpose by Robert Vischer, covers it. *Einfühlung* is a psychological term, but in its application it is primarily of aesthetic intent. It is a creative faculty, a requirement of the literary historian, scholar, critic and reader in order to be fair and creatively receptive to letters as an aesthetic experience. An array of facts sometimes ignores the core of literary art. One should discriminate between im-

partiality of judgment and dull erudition often mistaken for scholarliness.

j) In literature content and form are inseparable.

k) There is no international literature, only an international understanding of the national qualities and the universal values of literature.

l) As the most reliable medium of understanding, literature is a great lesson in compassion and irony. It diminishes or disarms man's inclination to forsake his human responsibilities.

III

It should appear from all this that in the realm of instinctual and intellectual awareness literature is an important experience. Whatever applies to literature, applies to world literature. To disregard world literature makes about as much sense as to expel the sun, rain, or storm from nature. The piping idyllic life of a shepherd portrayed in a poem or the subhuman level of people living in tenements portrayed in a novel or the emotional strain suffered by a tragic character in a play are experiences which, independently of the likes or dislikes of the reader or the audience, signify life meaningfully because of the form in which they were expressed. In true literary works the particular becomes universal, the local transcends its limitations. The main impression one retains from the study and works of world literature is *functional;* that is to say it reveals the common denominator of human similarities and differences. World literature gives meaning to the vision of universality; it is the legacy of man's sorrow and joy. With the concreteness of an image or powerful characterization it gives man, who lives in a despondent and fearful world, opportunity to experience the universe though vicariously, yet sincerely. As John Donne said: "No man is an island entire to itself. Everyman is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." World literature safeguards man against mere existence.

This didactic conclusion about the meaning of world literature is not in conflict with the point of view that literature must be first of all an aesthetic experience. When a person leaps from a bridge with suicidal intent and is suddenly overcome with a desire to go on living, it is evident that his ability to swim enhances his chance of recapturing life. The bridge and the river are indifferent to his purpose; it is his instinct for self-preservation and his skill (swimming) with which to realize it that will condition his act. Man without universal orientation is close to spiritual self-annihilation. In being a conventional or eccentric individual, focusing his attention solely on his personal, class, and national interests, he neglects the horizon of universality, and thus narrows life's horizon. As a self-centered individualist, class-conscious citizen or nationalist, he jumps with suicidal intent into the river of destiny, although superficially not at the risk of his life. When, however, he detects in his spiritual or social act a conflict with the fullness of life, and decides (and knows how to make use of this decision) to be a universalist without deceiving his individual responsibilities, then, as it were, he symbolizes man whose vision is in accord with the spirit of world literature. But he must know how to reach out for this vision; he must acquire understanding with which to reach the harbor of life.

Human fate is complex. Principles and values invite disintegration. Nonetheless some principles and values are held together by the functional force of world literature. This is not an unrealistic attitude; in fact, it is a rational one. As a strip of land, a home, a garden, a yard, despite its smallness, cannot be divorced from the globe, by the same token no literature can be divorced from world literature. There are too many people (even literary historians and scholars) who mistake the geographical smallness of a nation with cultural narrowness. With reference to ancient times as well as to modern times the study of every literature is a study of world literature, as the study of every

human being is a study of humanity. World literature is one of the several ways of introducing man to himself. The urge for revenge, the passion and dignity of Euripides' *Medea,* the light-hearted and sensuous poetry of Catullus, the stoic philosophy of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* show that there is a correlation between the actual, the possible, and the probable, as expressed by Greek and Roman authors, and between authors of today. Anachronisms reflect difference in taste, manner, and ideology, but do not detract from the timeless and timely validity of these works. Whoever gives scant attention to literature is apt to be confused and confusing even in matters of political, social, and economic import. Or—as T. S. Eliot remarked, although he referred to culture and religion—"if one decays the other may die too." A world which underrates literature and overrates literalness is likely to add to its chaos.

As religion, despite atheism and brazenness, still has a firm hold on many people, literature, despite its commercialized aspects, reaches many people too. But the interest is not substantial enough. Pretentious or timorous souls are inclined to seek "escape" in pseudo-imaginative or definitely inferior fictional and dramatic works. It is not wrong to conceive literature as a source of stimulation and recreation; what is wrong is the surface-reality of such experiences, and the reluctance or incapacity of searching for a deeper meaning in the printed word. The religious sense of security which Dante's *Divine Comedy* offers, the love that motivated the troubadour poets, the spiritual delight that a medieval *conte dévot,* such as *The Tumbler of Our Lady* gives, Don Quixote's wise madness, Hamlet's tragic hesitation, the fabliau-inspired earthiness of Francois Rabelais, Gulliver's sardonic relationship to his fellowmen, Tartuffe's hypocrisy, Faust's yearning for an affirmative philosophy, Rodion Raskolnikov's sense of guilt, Captain Ahab's tragic struggle with the White Whale, and many other examples taken from world literature, support the idea that the creative spirit makes life

meaningful, and that world literature, while it does not sanction the formlessness of human existence, establishes a common link between the past and the present, the immediate and the future, the implicit and the intricate, the familiar and the unfamiliar.

In reading Hungarian or Finnish folktales, or Aesop's, La Fontaine's, or Ivan Krilov's fables, the reader is closer to reality, no matter what his national or linguistic culture should be, than seeking excitement in recent pot-boilers. Reading Scandinavian, Polish, Romanian, Czech, Lithuanian, or Icelandic novels the American reader may discover the concealed meaning of his own idiosyncracies. Enjoying a Chinese lyric poem the American reader may recognize the diversity of subjectivity observable in his own heart, although never associating it with the sensitivity and the sensibility of a Chinese poet. And when we read twentieth century writers in whose works "man is condemned to absurdity," there too is noticeable a nostalgia for a worthy objective in life. A point in case is Jean-Paul Sartre, the French existentialist, who refutes man's congenital dignity but permits him to create his own freedom. Soviet writers and poets, admittedly propagandists of a "new social order," must be included in the universal realm of world literature. If not as literary artists, they must be included as literary exponents of anti-capitalistic frenzy and tactics, called "new realism." There is no compulsion of agreeing with their concept of form, but one must recognize their *need of form* when they write for literary, and not exclusively for political and sociological reasons.

IV

Goethe said that "viewed from the heights of reason life looks like some malignant disease and the world like a madhouse." Theodore de Banville, the nineteenth century French parnassien poet, declared that "the lovers of beauty and justice are exiles among men governed by coarse appetities." Jules Supervielle, the contemporary French lyrist and storyteller, who was born

in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, but whose roots and language are French, asks in his poem, "A Prayer to the Unknown," why man should not speak to destiny. He speaks to stars, trees, animals, and things; consequently why not try to bring peace to himself in turning to imponderables? This "impolitic" question shows man's solitude, and his need for some sort of cosmic intimacy. These three men of letters—and, of course, men of letters in other countries—possessed by a daimon that wishes to make the world fit for human habitation on a creative plane, represent the energy of poetic sensitivity. They personify a Promethean sense of independence and courage in facing inscrutable fate. Their creative and critical utterances indicate the disparity of imaginative and unimaginative reality. Their personal problems have a universal texture; their loneliness is the solitariness of the human universe; the individual accent of their spirit is the universal accent of the human spirit in search for purpose, order, and harmony. They are a mixture of pride and humbleness, as if this dualism were the essence of their being and destiny itself could not afford to by-pass it. They are as ignorant about the ultimate as the rest of mankind, but knowing how to give their words a tender, biting, or satirical tinge, they exceed the authority of human limits in exchange for the freedom of understanding, which is indispensable for the total realization of their personality, and which is the most precious virtue of human nature. Despite their finiteness, their imaginative horizon transcends empiricism.

One of the tragedies of humanity is that there is a sharp division between the creative and common pattern of life. In many parts of the world the creator occupies a subordinate position in the social scheme of things and he is prone to be an economic failure, unless he is fortunate enough to write something which, while it bears witness to artistic sincerity, has also popular appeal. The noble declarations of many "distinguished and influential individuals" in public life do not square with

facts. It is the fatal weakness of man that he mistakes words for action, and forgets to see the relevance of action to words. One reason why literary "isms" confuse the twentieth century reader lies in the maladjustment of writers and poets to a world that does not deserve the compliment of their adjustment. By sharing the dubious distinction of obscurity they really charge their fellowmen with indifference to the understanding, if not solution, of basic problems which demand the attention of the creative spirit. The non-conforming literary artist stands a poor chance for recognition because of the ills of society and the materialistic selfishness of individuals and groups. Generally the recipient of public recognition is the clever or seemingly clever or sometimes not even seemingly clever writer; and while in the past the true creator had to seek the good will of the patron, today it is the multitude and publicity offices that decide his lot. As an imaginative medium of personal, regionalistic, class, national, and universal experiences, genuine literature always found appreciation in a small segment of society. Compared with the past, no doubt, there is an increased interest in world literature. In the name of scholarliness, unfortunately, there is too much pasteurized criticism applied to literary works, and in the name of popular education too much quantitative and not qualitative evaluation. Some critics remind one of Molière's Mascarille in "Les Précieuses Ridicules" who dissects a bad poem and deciphers its nonexisting qualities with the technique of the "précieux." And—last but not least—for many citizens a broken fender is more of a headache than the breakdown of civilization, and the ennobling spirit of world literature, despite increased reading, is as strange to them as subtlety would be at a prize fight.

As art, world literature is the glory of form in a malformed world, and as a functional medium it serves the principle of true understanding. It is the expressive and expressed rhythm of similarities and difference on a level that transcends individual,

class, and national frontiers. It is fancy and fact, man and beast, the simple and the involved. It is loneliness, seeking protection with well-chosen words against the known and the unknown. World literature is universal man sentenced to life and sentenced to death.

PHILIP K. HITTI

Arab Literary Contributions to Western Thought and Culture

THE ARABIANS, true to their Semitic heritage, developed no art of their own other than the literary art. Their aesthetic nature expressed itself mainly through one medium—speech. Perhaps no people manifest throughout their history more enthusiastic admiration for literary expression than the Arabic-speaking people; none are so moved by the word, spoken or written. Arabic has a term for this strange influence the word exercises on the hearer or reader: *siḥr ḥalāl,* lawful magic.

Islam, the religion of the Arabs, made full use of this linguistic feature and the psychological peculiarity of its people. It based itself on one premise, the unmatched eloquence of the Koran as proof of its divine origin. A book, the Koran, was the only miracle wrought by Muḥammad, the unschooled prophet of Arabic. Indeed, when Muḥammad proclaimed *La ilāha illa-l-Lāh; Muḥammadun rasūlu-l-Lāh* (no god whatsoever but God; Muḥammad is the messenger of God), he dropped a spiritual bomb whose ingredients consisted of words and whose radiation is still felt throughout Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. These words constitute the profession of faith repeated daily by every believer no matter what his native tongue might be. Since the Koran was revealed in Arabic it became incumbent on every Moslem to pray through the medium of that tongue, "the tongue of the angels." Thus the triumph of Islam, which today claims the adherence of over three hundred million people, one-eighth of mankind, may be said to have been the triumph of a book, rather than the triumph of a personality.

In the Koran Arabic prose as a medium of artistic expression

makes its first appearance. Ever since then the Arabic of the Koran has been the model consciously or unconsciously imitated by all would-be writers. Before the Koran Arabic possessed hardly anything but poetry. Poetical composition was the only field in which the pre-Islamic Arabian excelled. The Bedouin's love of poetry was his only cultural asset. This early poetry was transmitted orally through many generations before it was recorded in the Islamic period. The poetical pattern remained the same after the rise of Islam. The ode *(qaṣīdah)* begins with a description of the camp of the beloved, a camel journey in pursuit of the departed sweetheart and a sketch of a hunting scene en route. In all, the personal, subjective element prevails. The poet is the object to be admired, not the poetry. The theme is mainly realistic, the horizon limited and the approach provincial. The appeal is not of the universal type. Clearly, if such material were translated into a foreign language, it would lose its local color and consequently its value. Specimens have been rendered into English. Here is one composed by Ta'abbaṭa Sharran, a pre-Islamic bard, describing his murdered uncle whom he was about to avenge:

> As the warm sun was he in wintry weather,
> 'Neath the Dog-star shade and coolness together:
> Spare of flank—yet this in him showed not meanness;
> Open-handed, full of boldness and kenness;
> Firm of purpose, cavalier unaffrighted—
> Courage rode with him and with him alighted:
> In his bounty, a bursting cloud of rain-water;
> Lion grim when he leaped to the slaughter.
> Flowing hair, long robe his folk saw aforetime,
> But a lean-haunched wolf was he in war-time.
> Savours two he had, untasted by no men:
> Honey to his friends and gall to his foemen.[1]

The rigid conventionalized pattern established by the early ode

[1]Reynold A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (Cambridge, 1930), p. 99.

was unfortunately followed throughout the later periods. It still claims the adherence of versifiers throughout the Arab world.

One pre-Islamic poet of the desert achieved international fame, ʿAntarah (+ 615). Knight, warrior, lover, as well as poet, ʿAntarah exemplified in his person and career the main traits highly prized by Bedouins. He lent his name to countless generations of story-tellers whose embellishments and amplification resulted in *Sīrat* (romance of) *ʿAntar*—a sort of Arabic *Iliad.* In its present form this romance of chivalry goes back to the Crusading period. A partial translation into English by Terrick Hamilton appeared in 1820. Caussin de Perceval introduced it later into French. A French dramatization followed. The episode relating to ʿAntar's death was greatly admired by the French poet Lamartine. Hit by a poisoned shaft on the battlefield, ʿAntar remounts his horse to insure the safe retreat of the tribesmen he was leading and dies on horseback leaning on his lance. No one dares approach him. Finally one cunning warrior devises a stratagem which startles the horse out of its marble stillness and results in dropping the corpse to the ground. Even today episodes from *Sīrat ʿAntar* are more popular in the East than those from the *Arabian Nights.*

As the word of Allah the Koran should not be rendered into a foreign tongue. It has, however, been rendered into a number of European tongues mainly by Christians. The first English translation appeared in 1649 (London): "The *Alcoran of Mahomet* translated out of Arabique into French .... And newly Englished for the satisfaction of all that desire to look into Turkish vanities." George Sale's translation (1734), the first to be done from the original Arabic, was influenced by an earlier Latin version. J. M. Rodwell's (1861) arranges the *sūrahs* (chapters) chronologically. This was followed by E. H. Palmer's (1880), which tries to reproduce the Oriental flavor. The most successful was that of Marmaduke Pickthall (London, 1930), an English convert to Islam.

In its translated form the Koran, composed in elegant rhymed prose, loses much of its rhythm and music. Nicholson in his *Literary History of the Arabs* tries to preserve some of the Arabic flavor in the opening chapter by translating it thus:

In the name of God, the merciful, who forgiveth aye!
Praise to God, the Lord of all that be,
The merciful, who forgiveth aye,
The King of Judgment Day!
Thee we worship and for Thine aid we pray.
Lead us in the right way,
The way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious,
  against whom Thou has not waxed wroth, and who go not astray!

At least one word was contributed to the English language by the translation of the Koran: "houris," those white-skinned, black-eyed heavenly damsels, endowed with perpetual virgin youth and beauty, promised the believers (Koran 56:22,34). The nocturnal journey vaguely referred to in a koranic passage (17:1) was amplified and embellished by later accretions and inflated into a miraculous trip that took Muḥammad from Mecca via Jerusalem to the seventh heaven. It became an especially favorite theme in mystic circles, Arab, Persian and Turkish. A modern Spanish Arabist, Asín has shown in his *Islam and the Divine Comedy* the influence of such Arab writers as ibn-ʿArabi (+ 1240) and al-Maʿarri (+ 1057), who treated the journey or the general theme, on Dante. Al-Maʿarri, the skeptic blind poet of Syria, was one of the few Arab poets who rose above the limitations of time and space to the realm of the universal. Here are two quatrains by him:

Virtue and Pride cannot each other greet;
As Youth and Age themselves can never meet;
  When this one grows, the other shrinks, and when
The Night is long the Day is not complete.

Tread lightly, for a thousand hearts unseen
Might now be beating in this misty green;

Here are the herbs that once were pretty cheeks,
Here the remains of those that once have been.[2]

Ibn-'Arabi of Seville was another rare poet whose work transcended the now and here and soared to the sphere of the ecumenical:

My heart is capable of every form
A cloister for the monk, a fane for idols,
A pasture for gazelles, the pilgrim's Ka'ba,
The Tables of the Torah, the Koran.
Love is the faith I hold: wherever turn
His camels, still the one true faith is mine.[3]

Traces of Moslem Sufi and eschatological thought are discernible in Christian mystic and scholastic writings. Between monasticism and Sufism action and reaction continued through the Middle Ages.

Next to the Koran the *maqāmāt* represent the most elaborate of all branches of Arabic belles-lettres. Initiated by a Persian, al-Hamadhāni (+ 1008), and developed by an 'Irāqi, al-Ḥarīri (+ 1122), the *maqāmāt* constitute a new type of literary expression. They belong to the essay genre. In them a short fictitious story in ornate, rhymed prose—adorned with flowery expressions, picturesque metaphors and profuse figures of speech —receives a dramatic presentation. The author undertakes a subtle and indirect criticism of the existing social order and tries to impart a moral lesson through the adventures of a cavalier-hero. Spanish and Italian tales of the picaresque variety, dealing with rogues and adventurers, show marked affinity to the *maqāmāt*.

Not only short story technique and dramatic presentation but also modern novel writing, in the judgment of scholars, owe something to Arabic patterns. The wit of the celebrated Spanish novelist Cervantes betrays Arabic models. Cervantes, it should

[2] Ameen F. Rihani, the *Quatrains of Abu'l-Ala* (London, 1904), pp. 70, 14.
[3] Nicholson, p. 403.

be recalled, was captured by Algerian pirates in 1575 and held for ransom for five years. He jokingly claimed that his *Don Quixote* had an Arabic original. It should also be recalled that the Arabs were in Spain from the early eighth to the late fifteenth century and in Sicily for about two centuries and a half beginning with 831. The Norman kings of Sicily continued the Moslem tradition and so did their successor Frederick II. In Spain Alfonso the Wise of Castile (+ 1284) patronized Arabic learning. He was responsible, among other projects, for the great collection of poetry, *Cantigas de Santa María,* the music of which, according to a Spanish Arabist, was of Moslem-Andalusian origin. Before Alfonso Archbishop Raymond I (1126-51) had made of Toledo an outstanding center for translating Arabic philosophical and scientific works—mathematical, astronomical and medical—transmitting them into Europe. Spain and Sicily were the two bridges over which Arab learning found its way into Europe. Syria in the Crusading period was a relatively unimportant third.

Arabic poetry in Spain became polished, refined, and reflected deep sensitiveness for and appreciation of the beautiful in nature. Gardens and flowers—almost unknown in Arabia—figured as poetical themes. The verses below of ibn-Zaydūn (+ 1071) of Cordova, addressed to the glamorous and talented Wallādah, daughter of the caliph, are a far cry from the Bedouin verses of Ta'abbaṭa Sharran cited above.

Today my longing thoughts recall thee here;
The landscape glitters, and the sky is clear.
So feebly breathes the gentle zephyr's gale,
In pity of my grief it seems to fail.
The silvery fountains laugh, as from a girl's
Fair throat a broken necklace sheds its pearls.

Oh, 'tis a day like those of our sweet prime,
When stealing pleasure from indulgent Time,
We played midst flowers of eye-bewitching hue,
That bent their heads beneath the drops of dew.

Alas, they see me now bereaved of sleep;
They share my passion and with me they weep.[4]

More than that, the Arabs in Spain developed a lyric type of folk poetry which a wandering minstrel of Cordova, ibn-Quzmān (+ 1160), elevated to the dignity of literary form. Ibn-Quzmān was a contemporary of the early troubadours. This new type of poetry, designated *zajal* and *muwashshaḥ,* lent itself to singing purposes. It soon aroused the admiration of Christian composers and was imitated by Spaniards. The popular verse form of *villancico,* extensively used for Christmas hymns, follows the *zajal* pattern. The sestet was evidently suggested by a form of *zajal.*

With this type of poetry was developed a theme of platonic love characteristic of Arabia and of Moslem society, where women are secluded and difficult to reach. The cult of the dame arises then in southwestern Europe under Arab impetus and spreads northward. The Provençal poets of Southern France make their debut in the late eleventh century with a theme of love expressed in vivid, often fantastic imagery reminiscent of Arabic poets. The troubadours begin to flourish shortly thereafter, imitating Arabic wandering minstrels and following the same poetical model. The researches of an American, A. R. Nykl, leave no doubt as to the connection between Hispano-Arabic poetry and Provençal troubadours. One of the most delightful of medieval love romances, *Aucassin et Nicolette,* composed by an unknown North French poet in the twelfth century, was evidently based on an Arabic original.

In Italy the cultivation of poetry in the vulgar tongue clearly followed the example of Arabic poets. The metrics of the carnival songs and of the *ballata* are basically the same as those of Moslem Spain and the Arab East. Italian poetry and song blossomed under Provençal stimulation. "Stanza," originally Italian, is a translation of Arabic *bayt* (house), strophe.

[4] Nicholson, p. 425.

A Spanish-Moslem litterateur, ibn-Ṭufayl (+ 1185), produced one of the most original and stimulating philosophical romances of medieval times. He entitled it *Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓān* (the living, son of the vigilant) and used it to prove, through the experience of the hero who had lived from infancy on an uninhabited island and attained by himself the Vision of the Divine, the capacity of the human being unassisted to attain knowledge of God and the higher world. According to this thesis the rational and the superrational can meet, revelation and reason can be reconciled and between facts acquired by faith and facts acquired by intellect no real conflict exists. Like his contemporary and fellow countryman ibn-Rushd (Averroës), ibn-Ṭufayl held what might be described as an evolutionary theory of creation. God did not create the world and rest; he is still creating it. Ibn-Ṭufayl's masterpiece was translated in 1671 by Edward Pococke into Latin; another Englishman, Simon Ockley, issued an English version of the Latin translation in 1708. The romance was later rendered into Dutch, Russian, Spanish and other languages. It is considered a prototype of *Robinson Crusoe*.

Arabic literature is especially rich in wise sayings attributed to philosophers and sages. One such piece was compiled in the mid-eleventh century by a Syrian prince in Egypt, ibn-Fātik, and rendered early into Latin. From Latin it passed into French, whence it was translated by Earl Rivers into English and entitled *Dictes and Sayeings of Philosophres*. This was the first book printed in England; it was done by William Caxton in Westminster in 1477. So popular did the book soon become that it passed through many editions and was used by numerous generations of English-speaking readers.

Not only is Arabic rich in wise sayings but in stories, edifying anecdotes and tales used didactically. With the infiltration of Arabic thought into Europe and the dissemination of Arabic philosophical and scientific works, Oriental tales, anecdotes and fables found their way into the West both orally and in writing.

No literature perhaps can surpass the Arabic in the quality and quantity of its stories. Travelers, sailors, pilgrims and Crusaders picked up such material and introduced it into the West. Because of their colorful imagery, rich flavor and didactic import, Oriental stories found ready lodging in European minds and hearts. The numberless *apologues, fabliaux, contes, examples* which had a wide vogue in Europe beginning with the thirteenth century bear unmistakable analogies to their Oriental counterpart. The celebrated Italian novelist and poet Boccacio (+ 1375) included in his collection of one hundred stories, *Decameron,* several Oriental tales received from oral sources.

As early as 750 the Arabs were in possession of a superb collection of fables, *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah.* These fables, ascribed to Bidpai, were translated from Pahlawi (Middle Persian) which had been in turn translated from Sanskrit. The heroes are animals personified and capable of carrying on dialogues. The purpose is to instruct by example and to impart a moral lesson. While the original has been largely lost, the Arabic version has survived to become the mother of all existing versions in some forty languages, including Icelandic and Malay. An early translation was that into Spanish by Alfonso the Wise; a Latin translation appeared in the same century, the thirteenth. Before Wyndham Knatchbull published an English translation from the original, several English versions had appeared based on earlier European translations. La Fontaine acknowledges his indebtedness to Bidpai, the Aesop of the East.

The largest and most important collection of Near Eastern tales is the *Thousand and One Nights,* commonly called the *Arabian Nights.* The basis of this collection was an old Persian work containing several stories of Indian origin. In the course of time folk-tales and other accretions were made from other cycles—Greek, Hebrew, Egyptian and Syriac. The final form was drafted in Cairo in the Mamlūk period, fourteenth or fifteenth century. First translated into French by Galland (1704-17), the

Nights, rich in adventure, imagery and color, have worked their way into most European and Asiatic languages. In all there are today some thirty French and English editions. Such words as afreet (afrit) and jinnee were thereby introduced into English. There is hardly an English-speaking child today who does not in his reading come across such stories as *Sindbad the Sailor* or the *Thief of Baghdad.* Even Hollywood has drawn on this source. The *Arabian Nights* were followed by *Persian Tales, Turkish Tales* and other Oriental stories, all of which had great vogue in Western Europe. They provided Voltaire and other French critics with a setting for their satires and attacks on the social and political order. Tennyson, Dickens and other English poets and novelists used the *Arabian Nights.* Chaucer's *Squieres Tale* came from the same source probably through oral transmission. But for the *Arabian Nights,* we are told by an English Arabist, there would probably have been no *Gulliver's Travels.*

More significant, but less detectable, than the material borrowing was the borrowing from Arabic sources that lies in the realm of the intangible—technique, form, motif and ideas. Such borrowing is by its nature hard to appraise. It served to widen the horizon, stimulate the imagination, raise the literary level and liberate Western thought from the traditionally narrow and rigid patterns. Moreover, it should be remembered that this entire literary infiltration was but a part of a wider movement which resulted in ushering into the West a body of scientific and philosophic lore directly from the Arabic tongue but ultimately of Greek, Persian and Semitic origins. It is no exaggeration to say that Arab contributions in mathematics, astronomy, botany, medicine and other fields helped to make possible the intellectual awakening of Europe from its medieval slumber. The appraisal of this scientific contribution is comparatively easy to make, but we are not concerned with it in this discussion. Such loan words from Arabic as algebra, alcohol, alchemy, Aldebaran, admiral, candy, sugar, orange, lemon,

coffee, syrup, sherbet, soda, jar, nadir, zenith, lute, magazine, ream, mattress, atlas, satin, damask, saffron, lilac, testify to the great debt the West owes the Arab East not only in the scientific and literary field, but also in the industrial and commercial field. As British, French and American teachers, beginning with the early nineteenth century, set out to establish schools, colleges, presses and translation bureaus in the Near East, they were in fact carrying back a spark from the intellectual flame which had originally started there.

WILLIAM HUNG

China's Greatest Poet, Tu Fu

MANY years ago I had the honor and pleasure of making the acquaintance of former Chancellor Bowman of the University of Pittsburgh. It was before the Cathedral of Learning was built. I recall how the name and the idea first struck me as something stupendous in the history of higher education. It was also my good fortune upon subsequent visits to catch glimpses of the concrete realization of the great dream by gradual stages. When Mrs. Mitchell planned for the magnificent array of Nationality Rooms on the ground floor, I realized at once the importance of a China Memorial Classroom, and I counted myself indeed lucky in being able to contribute even a small share in its inception.

Now as a further extension of the idea of the catholicity of all that is true, good, and beautiful in all cultures, the Nationality Room Committees and the Extension Division of the University have inaugurated the present series of public lectures on World Literatures. I am very happy to be here again and to have a humble part among so many distinguished colleagues.

Every literature is, of course, dependent on writing and education. In China, about fifty years ago, discoveries were made of a deposit of fragmentary tortoise shells and ox bones in the Province of Honan. There are writings inscribed on thousands of these fragments. The deciphering of the puzzling ideographs, the piecing together of the fragmentary passages, and the reconstruction of the history they represent are processes of a new research still far from complete. It is, however, sufficiently certain that the inscriptions were records of important divinations and events of the court and the temple, that their chronology falls within the span between the fifteenth and the eleventh centuries, B.C., and that the inscribed graphic forms

represent already a fairly advanced system of writing. Some paleographers are inclined to point to some of the inscriptions as evidence of the existence of schools in that remote period. While it is yet too early to be certain about the readings, it nevertheless stands to reason that the art of writing must have been transmitted from one generation to another through a process of teaching and learning.

It is, however, with Confucius in the sixth century B.C. that we must date the beginning of the philosophy and method of Chinese education. It was Confucius who broke the monopoly of the school by the noble clans. It was he who instituted a new intellectual aristocracy open to all who had the capacity and the volition to acquire learning. It was he who formulated a systematic curriculum of studies. It was he who laid the primary emphasis of education upon learning to be a gentleman.

Many years ago, when there were a great many Chinese laundrymen and very few Chinese students in America—When some Americans imagined China to be a big Chop Suey restaurant surrounded with numerous laundry houses—, a story was told of a Mr. Wang who happened to enter into a heated argument with his sophomore classmate, a young Mr. Smith, over some obscure point in philosophy. It might be either Wang's eloquence or the lack of it that irritated Smith. "Look here, Wang," said Smith, "I suppose your father was a laundryman. Why don't you become a laundryman also?" "Well, Smith," answered Wang, "I suppose your father was a gentleman. Why don't you become a gentleman also?"

By the middle of the second century B.C., Confucianism was already firmly established in the government and among the educated. A sort of a national university with government-appointed professors was instituted to transmit the canonized text and authorized interpretations of the literature of the Confucian school. By that time, however, the earliest classical literature of Taoism was already popular. I am inclined to the

view that Laotze, the founder of philosophical Taoism was a man who lived later than the time of Confucius, perhaps not very long before the time of the most brilliant exponent of Taoism, Chuangtze of the fourth century B.C. Instead of emphasizing the importance of the ethical life amidst social institutions, the Taoistic writers propounded the truth of the individual human life in the universe. It was but natural that ideas pertaining to the prolongation of the human life, to alchemy, to astrology, and to some superstitions grew later easily out of the Taoistic school.

By the beginning of the second century A.D. paper was invented in China. This material contribution to literature could hardly be overlooked by all historians. The Chinese literary output by that time was already considerable. The content of the imperial library, catalogued a little over a century before, was still mainly writings on silk and bamboo strips; and, not counting the scientific and technological works, the classical, philosophical, historical, and literary works were said to amount to more than seven thousand bundles or rolls.

In addition to Confucianism and Taoism, Buddhism which came into China and began to be noticeable in the first century A.D. exercised also considerable influence on the subsequent literature of China. While I believe that truth, goodness, and beauty are one and the same in the ultimate, I am inclined to think that the influence of Confucianism on Chinese literature is mainly ethical, that of Taoism, mainly philosophical, and that of Buddhism, mainly artistic.

About twenty years ago, a group of Orientological experts happened to meet in Paris. When the question arose as to what might be considered the most outstanding contributions of the Chinese civilization, the consensus of opinion named three items: cooking, poetry, and painting. I believe, indeed, that poetry is the best part of our literature.

I have chosen to speak this evening on our greatest poet,

Tu Fu of the eighth century, because though not really a competent student in the vast field of Chinese poetry, I happen to have studied Tu Fu for a period of forty years. About nine years ago, I published in the *Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series* three volumes on Tu Fu. The first volume contains my monograph on the transmission of the text of Tu Fu's poems, and there I proposed to set aside the forged text of 1667, which pretended to be a republication of the text of 1133 and which plagued all editions subsequent to 1667. The second volume is a republication of the text of 1183, which I consider to be the best of the old editions, though here and there some of the lines need to be emended with the variants from some of the later editions. The third volume is a bulky concordance to Tu Fu's poems, which I regard as indispensable in any research dealing with the life of the poet and the meaning of his language. During the academic session of 1947-48, I conducted a course at Harvard University on the historical background of Tu Fu. Since then, I have been preparing a book in English, which is now near its completion. It is to be a new biography of Tu Fu, illustrated with my own translation of some three hundred sixty of his poems. What I can endeavor to do this evening will not be more than to give a very brief sketch of his life and a few samples of his poems.

By the writers in the Western languages, Tu Fu has been introduced to the West as the Chinese Virgil, Ovid, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, or Baudelaire. How can one poet be like so many unlike ones? The truth of the matter is that Tu Fu is not like any or all of them. Tu Fu is unique.

Even among the thousands of Chinese poets, Tu Fu is unique. He is the only one whose influence grows with time. He was not one of the popular poets of his own time. Forty years after his death, poets began to realize that he was one of the greatest masters of their craft, and some of them would not hesitate to pronounce that he was the greatest. Three centuries after his

time, scholars began, in earnest, to collect his works, to edit them, and to provide them with commentaries. They began to study the incidents of his life in the light of his poetry and to understand his poetry in terms of his life and time. Thus the admiration of the man came from the fascination with his poetry, and the admiration of the poetry was further strengthened by the more detailed knowledge of the poet's life.

Throughout the centuries, there have been indeed critics who would praise this or that poet in preference to Tu Fu. The overwhelming majority of Chinese historians, philosophers, and poets would, however, confirm Tu Fu in the first place of honor. And this because, to them, Tu Fu, the man represents the widest sympathy and the highest ethical principles, while Tu Fu, the poet commands the largest variety of artistry and the deepest reality of art. If an exhaustive bibliography of the partial and the complete editions of Tu Fu's works should be compiled, the titles will run into hundreds. If a complete list be attempted of the works that contain more or less appreciative studies or comments on our poet, the titles would run into thousands.

Even today in China, when all standards of morality and literature have been thrown into a confusion worse confounded, the position of Tu Fu in man's fascination and respect remains alone unchallenged. Even those who stay at the extreme right to defend the status quo claim him, because he stands for unswerving loyalty to the government and unhesitating opposition to rebellion. Even those who gravitate toward the extreme left to proclaim a bloody revolution quote him, because he describes the most moving scenes of suffering and cries out the most indignant condemnation of injustice. Conservative students of literature admire Tu Fu's breadth of learning as shown through the rich and elegant display of terms and allusions culled from all types of historical and literary works and applied aptly to the subjects and situations he has to portray. They are fascinated with his clever manipulation as well as strict

observance of the rules of prosody in various standard forms of poetry. The iconoclasts, on the other hand, delight in his daring innovations in subject matter, in form, and in diction. The advocates of the vernacular literature point to his frequent use of dialectic vulgarisms and proudly proclaim him as one of the earliest masters to challenge the right of the dead classical usage to shackle living moods and creative thoughts. If one should try to collect from the publications of past and present poets and versifiers those pieces that suggest Tu Fu's influence either in form or in spirit, the number might run into hundreds of thousands.

The first biographical study of Tu Fu in a Western language was perhaps the long paper by the Jesuit missionary, Jean Joseph Marie Amiot, published in 1780 in the fifth volume of the *Mémoires concernant les chinois.* The story is very interesting, but very incorrect. Some of the errors recur in even recent studies. There is also a complete German translation of the 1457 poems in the existent collection by Edwin von Zach, published in the years 1932-38 in three serials, the *Monumenta Serica,* the *Sinologische Beiträge,* and an obscure periodical in Batavia, the *Deutchen Wacht.* The laborious effort is more ambitious than commendatory. Many of the poems ascribed to Tu Fu are not genuine. Many of the poems are so difficult that a thousand years of erudition have not succeeded to elucidate; and they are of course untranslatable. And Zach was frequently misled by the commentators.

In English, there are two volumes by Florence Ayscough, published in Boston in 1929 and 1934. These volumes are supposed to be a biography of Tu Fu, illustrated with complete or partial translations of some 470 poems. The plan of the work is excellent though the execution, utterly unsatisfactory. Mrs. Ayscough's reading ability in literary Chinese was very limited, and she depended largely on her Chinese teacher and helper who was made known to us only, through his *nom de guerre,*

as Mr. Cultivator-of-Bamboos. This gentleman's acquaintance with the history of the T'ang dynasty was rather superficial and his knowledge of Tu Fu's life especially inadequate. As a result, we see on Mrs. Ayscough's pages frequently only a lot of tough bamboos, and very little of what Tu Fu intended to impart to his readers.

I have not the time to mention or comment on the minor works on Tu Fu, nor the numerous anthologies in which Tu Fu is included. I must confess, however, that I have been frequently annoyed by reading the translations of spurious poems ascribed to Tu Fu. I have been, moreover, amazed to find such "translations" of Tu Fu, of which no Chinese originals, genuine or otherwise, could have possibly existed. In the several centuries after Tu Fu's poems became scattered and deranged, we had already too many Chinese poets forging the poems of Tu Fu. While I rejoice to see the growth of Tu Fu's fame in the West, I should hope to find no more Western poets writing new poems in the name of Tu Fu.

Our poet was born in the year 712, lived through the reigns of two emperors of T'ang dynasty and the first nine years of the reign of a third one, and died in the winter of 770. His time was a most exciting period in Chinese history. Emperor Hsüan-tsung (born in 685, ascended the throne in 712, abdicated in 756, died in 762), better known in history as the Brilliant Emperor, was the talented, generous, kindly, and jolly sovereign who brought the country into decades of peace and prosperity and made it into the most powerful and culturally the most brilliant empire of the world. In the capital city, Ch'angan, there were annually 8,000 foreign students. Unfortunately, the most brilliant emperor employed a most brilliant crook as his most trusted minister. With nineteen years of unchallenged power, this minister, Li Lin-fu whose words were steeped in fragrant honey but whose intentions always contained a murderous dagger sowed the seeds of disaster in every phase of the life of the empire,

political, economic, military, and educational. Worst of all, he succeeded to turn His Majesty into a complete fool, so stupid as to take the wife of one of his own sons and to make her his own favorite concubine. This talented, plump, and beautiful woman, known in history as Yang Kuei-fei, made the old emperor guilty of what Chinese historians had always condemned as the worst kind of nepotism—the kind the cause of which was a woman. The four Yang sisters and the three Yang cousins were among the highest and the most powerful at court and in the state. Corruption was rampant.

An Lu-shan was a Tartar of mixed breeds, a complete illiterate, a cunning rascal, and a ridiculously short and fat man with a protruding and hanging belly said to weigh at least four hundred pounds alone. With the protective patronage of Li Ling-fu, the illicit love of Yang Kuei-fei, and the blind trust of the emperor, he rose to become the governor-general of three important northeastern frontier areas combined and the most powerful military man of the empire. General An feared only the great crook, Prime Minister Li Lin-fu. After Li's death in 752, he despised the succeeding Prime Minister Yang Kuo-chung, one of the Yang cousins, and he staged a rebellion in December, 755. Lo-yang, the Eastern Capital, fell to An in January, 756. By June, the capital, Ch'angan was in the mercy of the rebels. The empire was thrown into the deepest chaos and dismay. The imperial family fled to the southwest. In order to appease the anger of the troops, the old emperor had to have his pretty concubine, Yang Kuei-fei, strangled to death on the way by the River Wei. The rest of the Yangs were all killed. This tragedy has been a favorite topic with novelists and playwrights. I have seen several novels in English on the subject.

The crown prince who succeeded the abdicating Brilliant Emperor and was known in history as Su-tsung was only a mediocre man. Fortunately he had excellent helpers. Among these was Kuo Tzu-i who was hitherto a rather obscure military

officer but who soon rose to be the greatest general and the most loyal defender of the imperial house. Even more interesting was Li Pi, a hermit who came to the refugee court to be the closest advisor of the new emperor in all matters of civil and military administration, and who, after having helped to recover the two capitals and to start the exile court on its triumphant return, refused to accept any honor or appointment and returned quietly to the life of a hermit in the mountains of Hunan. This was in strict accordance to the heroic example of the fifth century B.C. Fan Li who after having helped his prince to recover a lost kingdom, disdained any reward for his services and sailed away in a light boat among the lakes, never to return.

Though by December, 757 and January, 758, both the new emperor and the emperor emeritus were able to return to Ch'angan, the remnants of the rebellion were not really suppressed until after the deaths of the two emperors in 762. Some shortsighted and ill-advised measures prevented the recovery of law and order in the empire. Insubordination of the military men, local mutiny and insurrection were frequent. Taking advantage of the weakened conditions of the empire, the Tibetans on the southwest made repeated invasions. A large piece of territory fell to their sway, and in November, 763, they even occupied Ch'angan for twelve days, and Emperor Tai-tsung had to flee to the East. Poverty and suffering were everywhere evident, and many of the displaced persons were never able to return home.

Thus the amazing experience of a nation with peace and prosperity suddenly plunged through political intrigue and misgovernment into war and widespread suffering constitutes the main theme of Tu Fu's poetry. Because his observations are very keen, and his portrayals, very vivid, his poems have been generally regarded as indispensable for the study of the history of his time. The controlling ambition of Tu Fu's life was to serve his sovereign in some advisory capacity for the betterment of the

country. His anxieties and aspirations were mainly concerned with the good or bad aspects of government, with the welfare or misfortunes of the people, with peace or war. Because he was a patriotic, honest, upright, and, on the whole, wise and practical man, his poems frequently contain vital messages of societal importance. China would have been a better country if our politicians had taken to heart some of these messages.

In my book, I had divided our poet's life into twelve chapters. For the purpose of the present evening, I shall say that his life might be divided into four periods. We know very little about the period of his boyhood. Though he was precocious and learned to write early, none of his boyhood writings has come down to us. We do not know what time in the year 712 he was born. Nor do we know the place of his birth. The Tu clan originated in the neighborhood of Ch'angan, and in mature life, Tu Fu had lived for a time in Tu-ling and Shao-ling, both suburbs of the capital. Some of his ancestors were buried in Yen-shih, near the Eastern Capital, Lo-yang. Ch'angan and Lo-yang were the two places he frequently referred to as home.

His grandfather was a well-known official and famous as a poet. His father served as a local government official in various capacities and finally as an assistant prefect. He was thus born in an official family in comfortable circumstances. His mother died while he was still an infant. His father married again, and his stepmother probably did not care very much for him. He was mostly brought up by an aunt, a married sister of his father. This aunt whom he immortalized as the "Righteous Aunt of T'ang Dynasty" probably exercised more than any other woman an inspiring influence on our poet's life. The example of her character can explain a number of decisions in Tu Fu's life wherein he deliberately chose to leave the easier way of least resistance and to take the harder route of self-denial.

The second period might be said to begin with his later teenage years and to end with his thirty-fourth year of age. Most of

the years during this long period, he spent in carefree travels. A few years were spent in sight-seeing along the southeastern coast in the present provinces of Kiangsu and Chekiang. Then he returned to Ch'angan probably in 735 to get ready to take the imperial examinations in the spring of 736. Though he was quite sure of himself and some of the greatest masters of the time had high expectations of his success, the imperial examiners did not pass him. Then he spent several more years in travelling, wearing fine furs, riding on fine horses, hunting, and sight-seeing, mostly in the present provinces of Shantung and Hopei. The death of his father, probably in 740, interrupted such joyous roamings. As the eldest son, he had to wind up his father's affairs, to conduct the funeral in Yen-shch, to build a house there, and to live during the mourning period of twenty-seven months with his stepmother, three half brothers and one half sister.

To please his stepmother, he probably renounced his own hereditary rights to property and official service in favor of his half brother, Tu Yin, who soon became a petty official in one of the districts in the East. Our poet left home to shift for himself. During the larger part of the two years, 743-44, he was mainly in the Eastern Capital, probably serving as a sort of unofficial secretary or ghost writer for some dignitaries. Then he left to roam again in the eastern part of the present Province of Honan, and once more in Shantung, in search for a place of hermitage and the elixir of life. Part of the time, he was travelling and sight-seeing together with two elder poets, Li Po and Kao Shih, both of whom doubtless had great influence upon him.

For this long period, there are only about two dozen existent poems. Let me cite two of them.

"A poetry contest after dinner at the Tso Villa" is, according to my judgment, the earliest of Tu Fu's existent poems. It might be written late in the spring of 745, when he was on his way from the Southeast to Ch'angan to get ready for the imperial examinations. Candles were often marked at a poetry contest to

indicate the time allowed for versification. The sword mentioned might be an heirloom of the Tso family. Having books and swords generally suggests one's readiness to serve the country with knowledge and prowess. The Wu dialect was the language of the Southeast. The story of Fan Li, I had already mentioned a little while ago in connection with Li Pi.

A POETRY CONTEST AFTER DINNER AT THE TSO VILLA

Behind the windy woods, the slender moon was blurred;
A dew-moist lute was set ready for us to play.
Beneath the flower path, a hidden stream is heard;
Close to the thatched-roof smiles the spring start gay.

Books were consulted, and candles shortened much of the span;
We examined the sword, holding our cups undrained long.
The poems were collected. A chant in Wu began.
The story of Fan Li has an appeal very strong.

"Li Po and I calling on Hermit Fan" was written in Yen-chou in the autumn of 745. Li Po had already in the previous year left court service because of some intrigue against him. Hence the allusion of a famous historical figure who resigned from the government on the pretext of wanting to taste again certain special vegetable soup of his home place.

LI PO AND I CALLING ON HERMIT FAN

The beautiful lines of Mr. Li
Often resemble those of Yin K'eng.
I, too, am a visitor in the Tung-meng Hills,
And I love him like a brother.
Inebriate, we sleep in the same bed in autumn;
Hand in hand, we walk daily together.
When we want to find a quiet rendezvous,
We come to call on the scholar of the north suburb.
Our admiration leaps as soon as we enter the gate
To find the attendant boy so handsome and so polite.

As the sun reclines, we hear the mallets, pounding on washings,
We see the clouds hovering above the ancient city.
Accustomed we are to sing the *Praise of the Evergreen Citron,*
What officers really retire because of liking vegetable soup?
Let us drop all reference to rank and power,
Let our thoughts and feelings roam only above the distant seas.

The third period of our poet's life might be said to begin with the winter of 745 and to close with the early autumn of 759. This was a period of ups and downs mainly on account of his desire to serve the emperor; and he was most of the time in Ch'angan and its neighborhood. It was probably poverty that drove him back to the capital in the winter of 745. There he had a number of friends among the literary celebrities, and he probably eked out a livelihood by rendering some literary service as he did before in the Eastern Capital. Probably all of the "Eight immortals of the wine-cup" were his friends, though some of them had already left the capital. The poem was written probably in the second half of the year 746.

EIGHT IMMORTALS OF THE WINE-CUP

Ho Chih-chang rides his horse as if he is standing on a ship,
He might fall giddily into a well and be found under the water asleep.
Prince Ju-yang to court must drink three gallons before going,
Still his mouth waters when he sees a brewer's cart passing;
Too bad, he is not transferred to be Prince of Wine-spring.
Ten thousand coins worth of wine is Minister Li's daily requisite;
Like a giant whale with water, he will drink it;
Holding a cup, he says, "I enjoy the unmingled and avoid the split."
Ts'ui Tsung-chih is a young man, handsome and carefree;
Lifting a cup to heaven, he turns an eye dree,
And swirls in the wind like a jade-tree.
Before an embroidered Buddha, Su China is a strict vegetarian,
When drunk, he becomes a dozy latitudinarian.
For a gallon, a hundred poems Li Po would write;
In Ch'angan's wine shop he would stay for the night.
Called to the imperial barge, he wouldn't get up,
"Tell His Majesty," said he, "I'm an immortal of the cup."

Give three cup-fuls to Chang Hsu, the calligrapher of renown,
Even before dignitaries, he will throw off his cap and gown,
He will draw clouds on paper with his brush up and down.
Chiao Sui will require at least five gallons to be awake,
And then will startle the company with eloquence and without mistake.

In 747, the Brilliant Emperor wanted to give another generous chance to the scholars who had not passed the imperial examinations of the past. Even if a man was proficient in no more than one subject, he was now urged by His Majesty to come forward and be specially examined. Our poet was failed together with all other candidates by the great crook, Prime Minister Li Lin-fu who then proceeded to congratulate His Majesty for having had already combed the empire clean of all talents.

With such frustration, it was but natural that he frequently wanted to run away and disappear. It was the advice and help of good friends that prevented him from doing this. A specially close friend was Professor Cheng Ch'ien of the Academy of Literary Extension. Cheng was a renowned calligrapher, painter, and poet, and had an encyclopedic learning, including such matters as astronomy, pharmacology, and military history and geography. His influence upon Tu Fu must be considerable, and he was at times able to recommend Tu Fu for such literary labors as drafting funerary inscriptions, for which there would be rather handsome fees.

In 751, Tu Fu went boldly to place in the Imperial Hope Chest three literary pieces of his, known as *fu*—a *fu* is like prose in that thoughts are fully developed in logical order with no regards to the economy of words, but like poetry in that the lines are generally antithetical in structure and are rhymed. These three *fu* were on some impressive sacrificial ceremonies undertaken by the Brilliant Emperor earlier in the year. These masterly pieces immediately attracted the attention of the emperor who summoned the writer to the Academy of Talents to await further orders.

Tu Fu became at once famous. Here was a man approaching

forty, still single, and full of prospects of a glorious official career. The matchmakers would get busy. My guess is that Tu Fu got married to a Miss Yang in 752. He proceeded also to acquire some land and house in the neighborhood of the capital.

When the further orders of the emperor did come down, it was merely for our poet to take an examination at the Academy. Though the result was not an outright failure, it was almost as bad. He was ordered to go to the Bureau of Appointments and wait for his turn to be given a job. Tu Fu's own disappointment might be seen in these words:—

> But the flying sea-gull having lost its way
> Has to endure the chattering swallows and sparrows.
> The swimming carp failing to reach the Dragon Gate,
> Is thrown into company with miscellaneous watery snakes.
> Though the blue sky is still there for one to reach,
> No effort of the wings will enable the poor bird to rise.

He retired to his farm in the Tu Village and did not issue forth until after the death of the great crook, Prime Minister Li Lin-fu. Now with a growing family, the need of having a job became almost desperate. Despite another trial with the Imperial Hope Chest, still no appointment was forthcoming. The Yangs and their kind were in power. A long rain followed with flood, and famine came in the autumn of 754. Mr. and Mrs. Tu Fu and their children—possibly two pairs of twins—had to move to Feng-hsien for food, about 80 miles northeast of Ch'angan. He returned to Ch'angan in 755 to present another *fu* to the Imperial Hope Chest. This time, it was on the hunting eagle. The suggestion was clear: he wanted to serve the emperor by being the fearless eagle to clear out the old foxes and cowardly rabbits in the government. The foxes and rabbits probably thought it wise to get the fool of a poet out of the capital before he did something really rash. Accordingly, our kind-hearted poet, a man with the deepest sympathy for every living creature—a man who wouldn't want

to hurt a fly—was appointed to be the Commissioner of Police of the District of Ho-si—a job mainly concerned with whipping the draft evaders and the tax delinquents!

Of course, he refused. The appointment was changed to that of a Registrar in the Right Commandant's Office of the Crown Prince's Palace, a position with practically no duties, but with some land and salary grants sufficient for a moderate maintenance of his household. He probably left Ch'angan in midwinter for Feng-hsien, to bring the good news to his good wife. Upon arrival, he found an infant son had died of starvation. Then An Lu-shan's rebellion broke out.

In the summer of 756, he and his family were fleeing from Feng-hsien northward. After depositing the family in Chiang Village, he put himself on the road, probably in search for the exile court. Then he fell into the hand of the rebels, and during the autumn and winter of 756 and the spring of 757 he was in Ch'angan again, now under the rebels. "Lamentation on the river" was written in the spring of 757. The last line referred to the frequent rumor that the imperial armies were coming from the north.

LAMENTATION ON THE RIVER

I am an old rustic from Shao-ling who cries hard but not loud,
For I want to attract no attention as I walk along the Meandering River in the spring sun.
The thousand gates of the palaces on the banks of the river are all locked,
For whom then have these slender willows and tender rushes put on their green?
I remember formerly when the rainbow-banners descended upon the South Park,
Everything in the park burst forth with attractive colors.
The first lady from within the innermost palace
Accompanied His Majesty and came in the same carriage.
Preceding it were lady-courtiers, each with bow and arrows,
Each riding a white horse, champing restlessly its golden bit.

One of them bent backward to face the sky and to dispatch an arrow
to the clouds;
Just one shot brought down a pair of birds in flight.

Those shining eyes and sparkling teeth, where are they now?
Even the wandering ghost is stained with blood and can never come
back.
The clear Wei flows far to the East, the road through the Sword
Cliffs runs deep into the West.
One is gone, the other is left, and they can no longer communicate.
Any person with a heart will shed enough tears to wet his shirt;
But you, grass and flowers by the river, are you always heartless?
At dusk the Tartar cavalry are filling the city with dust;
I want to hasten to the south of the city, but I turn to gaze expectantly
to the north of it.

In the summer, he took the risk of running away from Ch'angan to join Emperor Su-tsung's exile court in Feng-hsiang. It was a hard walking trip of 103 miles to the west in frequent danger of being again captured. The emperor was very much touched with seeing him, and he was at once appointed a Reminder at court. This was an advisory office, exactly what he wanted—to remind His Majesty of what might have been overlooked. But when his friend, State Minister Fang Kuan was relieved of the seat in the State Council because of a petty offense, he remonstrated too strongly with the emperor. The emperor was angry, and our poet might have been punished by death. Pardoned and granted leave to visit his family, he reached Chiang Village late in the autumn, after a long trip.

CHIANG VILLAGE. FIRST POEM

From west of the mountainous masses of purple clouds,
The sun stretches a leg down to the flat ground.
Above the rustic wooden gate, the magpies are shouting
To welcome the traveller's return from a far distance.
My family are surprised to find me still in this world;
When the shock is over, they busy themselves with wiping their tears.

The storms of this troubled world have blown many a family apart;
That I am able to return alive is just a matter of lucky chance.
Many neighbors are climbing on the top of the walls;
Even they cannot surpress their sighs and sobs.
When the night deepens, a candle is lit;
We look at one another and wonder if we were not in a dream.

When the news came of the recovery of the capital, he hastened to the exile court and joined its triumphant return to Ch'angan. Then followed a few months of the happiest time of his life. He had great hopes with the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the empire. As a Reminder, he busied himself with one memorial after another to the throne. Let me quote "Overnight at the Eastern Division in the Spring." It was written early in the year 758.

OVERNIGHT AT THE EASTERN
DIVISION IN THE SPRING

Flowers disappear under the high walls at dusk,
Twittering birds are passing on their way to roost.
While the stars are twinkling above the ten thousand households,
The moon shines with extra brilliance on the heavenly precincts.

Even the turnings of the keys in the palace are heard in my sleeplessness,
And the wind reminds me of the tinkling jade pendants on the horses to court.
I have a memorial to present tomorrow morning;
Several times, I wonder how much of the night is gone.

A Reminder that keeps on reminding must soon be rather tiresome to His Majesty. By the early part of the autumn, we find Tu Fu already sent out to be the Commissioner of Education of the Prefecture of Hua-chou, 60 miles to the east of the capital. It is a slight promotion in rank, though in reality, a banishment. In January, 759, he was sent to Lo-yang probably on some official errand of the prefecture. He had the opportunity of revisiting

the old home in Yen-shih, which was now completely deserted,—except an old dog. When he was on his way back from Lo-yang to Hua-chou, in the latter part of the spring, the imperial armies in the East had been routed by the remnants of the rebellion. The government had to rely on impressment to get more men for the armed forces. "A recruiting officer at Shih-hao" was written at this time. It is one of Tu Fu's many famous poems on the injustice and suffering caused by war.

A RECRUITING OFFICER AT SHIH-HAO

In the evening, I found a lodging place at the Shih-hao Village.
A recruiting officer came to take men at night.
My old host fled by scaling the wall;
His aged wife went to answer the gate.
The officer was raging;
The old woman was crying bitterly.
I listened to what she said:
"My three sons went to the camp at Yeh-ch'eng;
"A letter came from one of the boys,
"Telling of the death of his two brothers in battle.
"The dead ones are forever gone,
"How long can the living last?
"There are no more males now in the household,
"Except a suckling grandson.
"His mother has not left, because of the son;
"And she has not a whole skirt to go in and out.
"Though I am an old woman and have not much strength,
"I will go with you, officer, this very night.
"Let me answer the urgent call from Ho-yang;
"I can at least cook the meals for our men."
Voices of talking ceased late in the night,
I seemed to hear only some subdued sobbing.
At dawn, I resumed my journey ahead;
Only the old man waved farewell to me.

The office of the Commissioner of Education had too many routine duties, not to the liking of our poet. I suspect also that he was not very much liked by the students to whom he had to give

preliminary examinations in order to choose the qualified candidates to send to the capital for the imperial examinations. His questions were too exacting on the knowledge of political economy. He himself was none too successful with imperial examinations—he certainly had not the Ph.D. degree to awe the students—, what right had he to demand so much of the prefectural students? The war against the remnants of the rebellion had turned for the worse. A new famine had broken out in the area. So at the beginning of autumn, he left his office—possibly by getting an indefinite leave of absence on some pretext—, and fled with his family to the West.

From then on until his death was the final period of eleven odd years during which the larger majority of his poems were written. He moved from one place to another, not as a carefree traveller as he did in the second period of his life, but only as an old and sick refugee burdened with the necessity of finding the wherewithal to support his family. He and the family were in Ch'in-chou (our present T'ien-shui) in the autumn of 759. When he wrote "The firefly," he was thinking of the powerful eunuch, Li Fu-kuo who was mainly responsible for the dismissal of many of his good friends from the government.

THE FIREFLY

Remember, you come only from among rotted weeds.
How dare you fly near the light of the sun?
You are not really bright enough to make books legible.
You can only make specks on a person's spotless clothes.
Carried by wind, you can hardly be seen on the other side of the curtain;
After the rain, you shimmer at the edge of the forest.
When winter comes with severe frost,
Scattered and afraid, where can you go?

The Tu family were in Ch'eng-chou in the winter. They were poverty-stricken. Our poet had to pick acorns and dig yellow yams for food. "Empty purse" was written probably at this time.

EMPTY PURSE

Green cedar leaves, though bitter, can still be swallowed;
The rosy sky at dawn is ample for food.
The world will stop at nothing;
But my way is the hard way.
Without cooking, the frozen well can be undisturbed in the morning.
Without bedding, the bed is naturally cold at night.
The purse might be shy of complete emptiness;
I must leave one copper coin for it to keep.

By the beginning of 760, they were in Ch'engtu. Here they lived until the autumn of 762 in a thatched hut which friends and relatives helped our poet to build by the Brocade River. Judging by "The river village," he was fairly happy. But by "The autumn gale tearing off my thatched roof," he was, of course, not.

THE RIVER VILLAGE

A curve of the clear stream flows around our village;
Everything is pleasant in the river village on a long summer day.
The swallows on the beams come and go as they please;
The gulls on the water flock together in mutual affection.

My good wife draws a chess-board on paper,
Our little boys hammer needles into fishing hooks.
All that a frequently sick man needs is medicine;
What more can a humble person ask for?

THE AUTUMN GALE TEARING OFF MY THATCHED ROOF

The madly howling wind of a matured autumn in September
Has rolled off the three layers of thatch on my roof.
Most of the stalks have flown across the river and dropped along the bank;
Some are caught and entangled among the treetops high up,
Some are rolling on the ground until they sink into some hollow below.

The boys of the southern village take advantage of my age and infirmity
To steal my property right before my eyes,
To carry openly each an armful of thatch into the bamboo grove.
I yell, and I call until my mouth is dry and my lips are parched;
Then I return to the house, I lean on my staff, and I sigh.
Soon, the wind subsides, and the clouds, black as ink,
Are covering the autumn sky to hasten on the dark night.
The cotton quilt after many years' use is as cold as an iron-sheet
And is torn inside because our spoiled children sleep restlessly and kick their feet.
The roof leaks over the bed, and there is no dry spot.
The drizzling rain continues like flax fibres without a break.
Since the rebellion, I have lost much sleep;
Now I wish a quick end to such a night, long and soaking wet.
Would it be possible to build a huge house with many million rooms
To give shelter to the poor scholars of the whole world, who should all be happy
Even in a rainstorm, for the house should be as unshakable as a mountain?
Oh, if I could only see this house suddenly appear before my eyes,
Let my hut be smashed, let me die alone in exposure, and I shall be contented.

In the first half of the year 762, our poet's friend, Yen Wu was Governor-general in Ch'engtu. There were pleasant parties and exchange of poems. With the enthronement of Emperor Tai-tsung, Yen was called to the capital. A subordinate general staged a rebellion in Ch'engtu. Because the rebel was an acquaintance and an admirer, our poet thought it best to avoid any contamination by fleeing to the eastern part of the province. His family followed him shortly. While still moving about in the eastern parts of the province, a new appointment came to our poet in the spring of 764. He was to be the Commissioner of Education for the Capital Prefecture. It was an advancement by two steps over his last appointment in Hua-chou. He refused to

accept the appointment, for he had enough of the experience of examining students.

Then his friend Yen Wu was appointed again Governor-general in Ch'engtu. He and his family returned to live in the dear thatched hut for a little over a year. Yen urged him to serve as a military advisor at the Governor-general's headquarters and memorialized the throne to give him the rank of an Auxiliary Secretary of the Ministry of Public Works. He did give some sound advice to Governor-general Yen in matters of military administration, which probably helped to inflict a defeat on the Tibetans in the autumn of 764. In the distribution of rewards granted by the emperor, our poet was given the privilege of wearing red instead of green.

Governor-general Yen Wu died in May, 765. Evidently anticipating some trouble under Yen's successor—which did indeed shortly break out—, our poet took his family and left Ch'engtu on a boat. His intention was to reach Ch'angan and home. But the voyage was here and there interrupted on account of his ill health. From the spring of 766 to the spring of 768, they lived for two full years in K'uei-chou, though they had to move their lodging quarters a couple of times. Thanks to the generous assistance of Governor Po Chen-chieh, the economic conditions of our poet were tolerably good in K'uei-chou. He even bought houses, a garden, an orchard, and some rice-farms. He wrote more than four hundred poems in K'uei-chou, and many of them are justly famous.

In the spring of 768, he made another effort to return to Ch'angan. He gave away his property in K'uei-chou and sailed with his family down the Yangtze. Again his own ill health and troubles in the North prevented the realization of his hopes. He was obliged to spend the remaining almost three years of his life south of the Yangtze along the River Hsiang. Even in the summer of his last year, he met a local mutiny. He and his family had to flee again. His last poem is a fairly long one.

SICK WITH A COLD IN THE BOAT, I WRITE IN BED THESE THIRTY-SIX RHYMES TO PRESENT TO THE RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN THE HUNAN GOVERNMENT

O Huang-ti and Shun whose music was supposed to have brought the harmony of the seasons,
You might have very well stopped your tunings and playings,
For your pipe has issued forth wrong notes, and your lute is half dead.
You, sages of hoary antiquity, how much do you know of the agony
Of one, old, sick, and long away from home?
My boat is anchored indeed by the eastern—the better side of the lake
Where I can watch the rising Orion early above the western horizon.
But what I hear is like the chilling flute in Ma Jung's poem,
And the wind is like that which blew on Wang Ts'an's bosom.
And I, like these two poets, am also in a distant region,
Looking with a sad longing to the crispy cold of the home country,
While the clouds here are darkening the lateness of the year
With a mist that blurs the white houses in the villages,
With the wet green hills piling up upon the maple-lined shores,
With a drizzling, soaking rain that has lasted too long,
And with a flaming epidemic that comes in a stifling winter.
What good will the villagers accomplish by beating the drums to welcome
The spirits that can do nothing, or by shooting the birds
That merely resemble the owls of ill-luck?
Thus exhilaration vanishes when one just begins to enjoy an unburdened moment,
And worries rush in with an irresistible suddenness.
Mine has been a life that vacillates between sinking and floating
Amidst an environment of dreary decadence.
Should there be no fear that I might be the target of some evil,
Since I still retain the hat-pin of some official status?
My persistent remonstrance had displeased the last emperor.
My precipitous flight was on account of the treacherous rebels.
Where will these mad wanderings finally lead?
With so little talent, I am hardly worthy of the regards accorded me.
I am accustomed to the poorest vegetable soup, thin and unflavored.
You have over-estimated a retiring man, as if he might rise high.
The hermit's stool is cushioned with layers of black hide.
The scholar's clothes are mended with numerous patches.

But my songs of discomfort are mainly concerned with the misfortunes of the country,
And my shame is only that I had not written some effective proclamations against the rebels.
The fragile linen of Shu, which I had worn for ten summers
Had suffered three autumns of hard washing in Ch'u.
Since I have been invited to feast in the hall with brocade curtains,
Long have I sung the *Song of Permanent Fidelity.*
Though I know the wholesome simplicity of ancient times would hardly return,
I have embraced a naive innocence to the oblivion of a world of machinations.
Of food, I have taken a few mouthfuls, more than a little wren can pick up,
But of money, it has to be almost perfectly right to give as well as to receive.
Going home? The old verses about the abandoned spring grass only deepen my forlornness.
Some place to settle down? The fictitious Valley of Peach-blossoms has already cost much lonely search.
Think not that a person blown about as a thistledown is free from sharp anxieties,
Especially since his illness has worsened with the help of medicine,
Since he had to leave a dead child in a road-side grave,
And since he could not walk without the support of a stick.
It is useless for a stumbler to try keeping step with the times,
He might as well rest contented and be grateful that there are people who understand.
Moreover, there are friends who would wag tongues of superlative eloquence
To recommend the handle of a sword for sharpness!
The ocean-wide hospitality that receives all streams without discrimination,
The mountain-height of favors with steep approaches,
Are combined in the city palaces spreading out in the freshness and brightness
Of the green bamboos by the deep blue waters.
Plenty there are of those who with open faces of engaging smiles
Have kept on running and climbing with surprising speed.

And yet, tolerance has been allowed one who is too unskilled to flatter,
Such is indeed the shining grace from God.
Now the ambitious foe is still relying on his strategic advantages,
Some rebellious renegades are still at large,
Letters from the Central Plains are rare,
And up in the North, hostilities are thick.
I understand that a stranger is liable to the suspicion of abusing the drinking well.
I know, too, that it is not easy to observe the custom of a distant province.
But the bloodshed of war has continued as usual,
And the cries of battle have not ceased even now.
From his corpse, Ko Hung had departed alive.
In exile, Hsu Ching was still able to manage well for his family.
One had mastered economy, the other, the secrets of immortality.
I have failed in both. I have only timely tears.

This was written in the winter of 770, in all probability, very shortly before his death. The place was Ch'angsa.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, this lecture is already too long. Let it suffice for a very rough outline of the amazing life of our poet. I need only to add a few words of my personal testimony.

When I was a boy of thirteen, my father gave me a set of Tu Fu's works in one of the then popular editions. My father told me that Tu Fu was a man of ambition, character, and humor. "He was that type of a man," said my father, "that if he had luck, he would succeed, and if he had no luck, he would not fail." As I grew up, I learned to like the Bible as the best of books. Next only to the *Psalms,* the poems of Tu Fu have given me fascination, joy, and consolation. Even after forty years of frequent reading and several years of intensive research, I cannot claim to have understood fully the poet. I feel, however, that I have a fairly accurate understanding of the man. He appears to be a filial son, an affectionate father, a generous brother, a faithful husband, a loyal friend, a dutiful official, and a patriotic subject.

His profound studies of history and literature enabled him to understand the strength and frailties of human nature, of the bright and sordid possibilities of politics. Many of the observations he made of the eighth century T'ang empire can be said of the 1949 Chinese republic. Because he held firmly to his convictions and refused to stoop to opportunism, he was frequently regarded by the small-minded among his contemporaries as a sort of a fool. I feel, however, that he was that sort of a fool I would not be ashamed of being.

ZDENEK NEMEČEK

Karel Čapek

On the night of March 15, 1939, at eight, somebody rang the bell of a two-story house, set in a garden in Prague. Rose, the cook, answered the door to two strangers who asked for the house owner. Rose's answer was that only the mistress of the house was in, whereupon the men asked to see her. A few minutes later Mrs. Olga Čapek Scheinpflug appeared, the actress of the National Theatre. Upon her asking the men their names, she was told they were members of the German secret police, coming to arrest her husband, writer Karel Čapek. That day, March 15, 1939, Prague and with it Czechoslovakia had been occupied by Hitler's armies. In the wake of them, and, sometimes simultaneously, the German secret police arrived, arresting the spiritual leaders of the nation.

Mrs. Olga Čapek, clad in black, could not contain herself, her voice rose when saying, "Your lists, gentlemen, are inaccurate. The German secret police should know that author Karel Čapek died eleven weeks ago, at Christmas, 1938." She turned and left.

That was March 15, 1939, the historic day which opened the eyes of the world at large, showed agreements to be futile, showed that no ten Munichs and no ten compromises were enough to stall the maniacal dictator in his march.

Surely, the German police had good reason for wishing to apprehend, the very night of Hitler's occupation of Prague, the debilitated, ailing, forty-eight-year-old man whose permanent weapon had been the pen. The fighter for democracy, friend, and chronicler of President T. G. Masaryk was deemed so dangerous as to warrant immediate elimination from the body of the occupied nation. But the fighter was no more alive, unable to satisfy the two secret service men, in order that democracy

in its purest form should be incarcerated in a cell of Pankrac prison in Prague.

That night a great number of outstanding men of my people were arrested, such as never had a shotgun in their hands, and yet ranged among the most dangerous in the opinion of the occupying power. Some were held as hostages all through the war; others perished in concentration camps. Karel Čapek had left the temporal world prior to the advent of the uniformed brute force, yet having had a premonition of its coming. He even pinned it down in some of his books and dramas. His brother Joseph, eminent painter and writer in his own right, coauthor of some plays, was arrested and died in the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen toward the close of the war.

I met Čapek shortly after World War I. I had returned from Russia and used to bring my first literary items to the editorial office of the Národní Listy. Čapek, then thirty, was editor of the literary column. From that time we kept up friendly relations until his death. Having been a consular officer and in the diplomatic service, I was not supposed to publish political editorials in papers, or, rather, men like me had to first secure the approval of the pertaining ministry with regard to the treatment of this or that subject. I used a pen name which it took me a long time to evolve. It was a cryptogram. My given and last names taken together contain five E's. I therefore chose *pente,* Greek for five, and signed PENTEE. I considered myself perfectly protected by this pen name. But one day Čapek came to see me and said, "Pente-e, but that's you!" Among his hobbies were crossword puzzles and riddles. Between the two wars I had been abroad several times, went to West Africa and the West Indies. Knowing of Čapek's predilection for records of exotic music, of little-known nations, I always brought some back for him. Another enthusiasm of Čapek's was gardening and mycology. He truly knew every mushroom of our woods and was always swamping the house with them to the none-too-great pleasure of his wife.

Čapek had many more hobbies, all pointing to a very complex nature. But, of course, his paramount passion was literature.

Ladies and gentlemen, I presume that some of you have read his books or seen his plays on the stage, while others of you are not familiar with them. Let me, therefore, recommend to those of you who have not read his works to seek them out. But to all of you, whether familiar with his work or not, I should like to tell something of the life of the man and of the philosophical groundings from which he took his issue.

Čapek's father was a provincial doctor in a region of rolling country, well known to me, since I, too, hail from it: it is in northeastern Bohemia, not far from the Silesian border. While greatly interested in medicine, Karel decided to study philosophy. His brother Joseph devoted himself to painting. The countryside enveloping the childhood of the brothers, while lovely and moving, was not dramatic by any means. The slopes of the hills were strewn with cottages where weavers wove their linen cloth and then went out to deliver it to their customers. Famous Bohemian glass cutters produced their miracles in crystal. They were the patients of Čapek's father, and the brothers moved among them. You will find traces of those first impressions in that environment in the work of both Čapeks—in their books and pictures. And the identical political whirlwind, the fury of which razed their native land, slew both brothers.

It is perhaps worth emphasizing that, though Čapek was the first Czech author to become widely known outside the frontiers of our country, and in this respect his rise to fame offers a striking analogy with Czechoslovakia's advance as an influential factor in the politics of postwar Europe, his full merit as a literary artist can be appreciated only by those who are acquainted with his work in Czech. No translation does thorough justice to his mastery of the Czech language, the resources of which he utilized so deftly and so variously. On the one hand, for example, there are his short stories which reproduce the lilt

of Czech as spoken by the man of the street; while in contrast to his racy vernacular, there are his lyrical versions of French poets, from Baudelaire onwards, in which the diction is attuned to the verbal melody of the original poem. Thus, a comparison of Verlain's *Ecoutez La Chanson Bien Douce* with Verhaeren's *L'Arbre,* as rendered into Czech by Čapek, shows how admirably the difference of style between the two poets have been conveyed in a linguistic medium so different in structure and phonology from theirs. He was familiar with it in all its aspects —its wealth of racy idiom, its byways, its slang, the breadth and depth of its lyrical range—and in an eloquent essay, he paid tribute to its strength and beauty.

Well, that's about his medium of literary and artistic expression.

One of Čapek's early works was entitled *Pragmatism.* This word is familiar to you, since it grew out of your American soil. Permit me to digress just for a moment to say a few words on the subject of pragmatism.

It is a philosophic doctrine or mental attitude which is a reaction against the intellectualistic speculation. It insists that all thought is personal and that "pure thought" is a figment. Truths are always, on one side, matters of belief, and beliefs are rules for action. All this amounts to a systematic protest against the notion of dehumanized thought. You know that the term was invented by C. S. Pierce in his discussion with your philosopher William James at Harvard University. The word pragmatism itself first occurs in print in 1898 in a James pamphlet. The application to logic was mainly made by John Dewey and his pupils.

Outside the English writing world, kindred or identical tendencies are represented in France by Leroy, Poincaré, and Henri Bergson, in Germany by Mach, Simmel, and Jerusalem, in Czechoslovakia by Karel Čapek and several fellow writers of that generation.

You see, this is one example of the New World, this great country of yours, beginning to repay old I.O.U.'s to its Alma Mater, Europe. I may go so far as to assert that the influence of American philosophers, of Pierce, William James, or John Dewey, as revealed in pragmatic theory, may be found in almost all of Čapek's works.

You know that the human situation remains basically the same, but novelists' perspectives on it vary greatly. Point of view is extremely important in fiction. Values depend on how you look at things, at human relations, at love, at money, at society, at socialism, at liberalism, at capitalism, and so forth, and that depends, in turn, what you are. When life seems to have lost its meaning or value, it is because something has happened to the valuer, not to life.

Following Munich, Czechoslovakia mourned. It was the time of the treason of the Great Powers, the time of shortsighted Daladiers and Chamberlains; life had lost its meaning for the fighters for democracy, humanism, and pragmatism. Something had happened to the values, but still life went on, even under the swastika. But a man of Čapek's ilk could not take part in it.

In the difficult choices which life is constantly offering, men show their order of values by what they are willing to pay or sacrifice for what they consider the greater good. As long as men are capable of any desires and satisfactions, life has potential value for them. Otherwise, perhaps they have a strange choice: to serve a cause which they hate, or to go into exile, or to die. Čapek did not choose to be an exile and he died on Christmas Eve, 1938.

All his life he was convinced that a democracy could be organized to permit as free a play of personal choice as possible, to enable men with very different values to pursue their own ends freely and still make the greatest possible contribution to society. The play and the novel helped him in this, and he let us see things from very different points of view by increasing

tolerance and sense of individual responsibility. Historically, the novel originated along with democratic individualism, flourished with it in the nineteenth century, and, in Čapek's country, seemed doomed along with it in the first half of the twentieth century. The very nature of the novelist's art required him to test every totalitarian generalization, every value, every form of action according to its meaning for the individual. This had stopped in our country after the gloomy morning at Munich. This very fact precipitated Čapek's death.

Before speaking of his works translated into English, let me enumerate those which were published in the United States. *Absolute at Large.* (New York, 1927); *First Rescue Party.* (New York and Toronto, 1940); *Gardener's Year.* (New York, 1931); *Intimate Things.* (New York, 1936); *Krakatit.* (New York, 1925); *Macropoulos Secret,* adapted by Randall Burrell. (Boston, 1925); *The Meteor.* (New York, 1935); *Money and other Stories,* foreword by John Galsworthy. (New York, 1929); "Mother," a play. (New York, 1939); "Power and Glory," a drama. (New York, 1939); "R.U.R.," a fantastic comedy; "Adam the Creator," a play (New York, 1930).

These are the major works of Čapek, translated into English. Some of them were published in twenty or more languages, including Japanese and Chinese. May they be characterized cumulatively in whatever way, may some be found better and some weaker. They all have this in common: in a world where much is unknowable, Čapek takes refuge in what is knowable, matter of fact, and practical. Even in his Utopias he acts so as to arrive at a practical conclusion. Besides that, he always shows that courage is the human virtue that counts most—courage to act on limited knowledge, courage to make the best of what is here and not whine for more. Earth is the right place for love. I don't know where it's likely to go better.

At the age of eighteen, Čapek wrote his first short story for a leading Czech daily. Its title was "The Avocation of Love."

The subject of artificial man rebelling against his inventor in the very moment he conceives love and grasps the fate of man in the world was broached here for the first time. This motive of love rescuing the world, lest it hurls itself into total catastrophe, reappeared in dramatized form in "R.U.R.," the play which penetrated the world at large and which was presented last month on television.

Allow me to epitomize Čapek's works, giving briefly their contents.

1918, the year that marks the end of the first World War and the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic, was the year in which Čapek published his book *Pragmatism* or the *Philosophy of Practical Life*. This book, which brought the freshness of relativism into the land of ethical absolutism, the land of such truth seekers as John Hus, Comenius, and Masaryk, had an uncommonly strong influence on literary production. The generation of pragmatists was the first to rid itself of the national tendency toward intellectual ponderosity. In their novels and short stories we observe the leavening influence of the idea of truth as something useful to life. Their work is an optimistic yea-saying to the young Czechoslovak democracy and a friendly admiration for the ideas of the American democracy on its highest level.

May I repeat that Čapek's work is permeated by the philosophy which is satisfied with modest truths when the great absolute ones appear inaccessible.

In his first collection of short stories *The Garden of Krakonos, The Gleaming Depths, Roadside Shrine,* he shows the meditations of the limits of rational thought. In his next collections *Stories Out of One Pocket, Stories Out of the Other Pocket,* he shows the relativity of limits between high and low literary media by using detective stories to illustrate philosophic truths. From then on he embarked on a search for the core of the short story. First he did an experimental series which he called *Sub-*

Stories and a collection of essays on what he called "Peripheral Literature." In the works which followed he demonstrated the mastery of the transitional forms which he had defined. Thus, for example, in his "Letters" from England, Italy, Spain, Holland, and the North, he created a much imitated form of combined sociological essay, travel feuilleton, study of national character, and sparkling journalism—the product of an observer, trained by many years of newspaper work.

His novels are experiments in technique and ideas. *The Absolute at Large* is a roman feuilleton, *Krakatit* and *The War with the Newts* are visionary satires on the future of humanity, always ending with a backward glance at basic human qualities. Two of his last novels, *The Meteor* and *The First Rescue Party,* represent a return to complete realism, as does *Hordubal,* a somber story of a repatriated miner who returned from Pittsburgh to Czechoslovakia with all his savings in cash and was murdered. This story is told from the point of view of the persons involved.

The dramas following "The Brigand," a fable of youth, and "The Insect Play," a medieval parable on insects and human society, include his technological phantasies "R.U.R." and "Adam the Creator," as well as his studies of longevity "The Macropoulos Case" and "The White Sickness." All of these works have been translated into many languages.

Karel Čapek remained consistently logical even in dealing with logical absurdities. The other members of his generation showed no such respect for logical causality in their stories. This is especially true of his brother Joseph Čapek, the painter, who collaborated on many of the elder Karel's short stories and dramas.

Čapek has criticized the evils of modern civilization in several, one might say, almost anti-utopian Utopias. His best work is the trilogy of novels, *Hordubal, The Meteor,* and *An Ordinary Life.* Each of these novels tries to tell the same story from a different

point of view in order to enhance the variety of its meaning and to suggest the utter mysteriousness of ultimate reality. *Hordubal* on the surface is a story of crime from the Carpathian Mountains. *The Meteor* is made up of speculative reconstructions of the early history of a pilot who has come down in a crash. *An Ordinary Life* is the novel of a Czech bourgeois, the story of a railway clerk who discovers unexpected hidden selves in his own mind and past. But these books all center round problems of truths and reality and constitute one of the most successful attempts at a philosophical novel, not only in Czech.

But Čapek does not owe his success to his finest books. Many readers will prefer his utopian romances and plays, like *The Absolute At Large* or *Krakatit,* his many original crime stories, the charming sketches, and travel books.

First Rescue Party, taken from the life of miners, is full of Čapek's social feeling and his real understanding of the common man.

He has been frequently called by our Czech criticism too international, which is probably true of some of his utopian romances and plays. But a book like *An Ordinary Life* is a finely drawn picture of the Czech atmosphere, and there is something very representative and national in Čapek's love of the small man, in his genuine democratism and humanism.

"The White Sickness," which was produced with great success throughout Europe, is a tragicomic indictment and exposure of the totalitarian dictatorship. The white sickness is a mysterious, revolting, deadly disease which appears as a pestilence wherever fascism of any color comes to power. In the end it brings down the dictator himself at the moment when the chaos of a big war finally closes in. "The White Sickness" shows the most brilliant, humorous, polished side of the poet. It shows Čapek, moreover, as a fighter of quality who was able to wage war on the highest level, from the watchtower of the spirit.

The Newts, the story of these sly, clever creatures which were

first trained by man for all sorts of uses and which, finally, turning into a mob without soul or morals, but with dangerous technical skill, plunge the world into ruin. This story is still full of meaning, so contemporary, existing, and entertaining that it wins friends everywhere.

Now, I would like to add a few words about the most famous play to come out of my country, and, at the same time, one of the best known of all the modern plays, the "R.U.R." or "Rossum's Universal Robots." Čapek wrote it when he was thirty and I happened to see the first performance of it, the world première, in Prague, 1921. I remember having read the most controversial criticisms about it ever since. It was a success in Prague, London, New York, Tokio, and Sydney in the twenties; it was a failure at the Theatre des Champs Elysés in Paris. Rossum is, in the play, the name of the inventor of artificial men. The name itself, Rossum, was made by Čapek out of the Czech word *rozum,* which stands for "brains" in English. The other word "robot," also an invented word, is derived from the Slavic root, *robota,* meaning "work." The play immediately gave a new and seemingly permanent word to all civilized languages.

In construction, "R.U.R." is sheer melodrama and should be judged on its own merits. It is unfair to apply to it the criteria of subtle characterization, convincing dialogue, and credible action. From the realist's point of view the characters in "R.U.R." are as impossible as the fantastic yarn itself. We see normal human beings as well as artificial robots in an almost terrifying revolutionary action. We have here ideas of social discontent and cynical concepts of progress. We have here a parable of Man, whose mechanical techniques and inventive skills outrun his social intelligence, his altruism, and his humanity. In this play, more insistent than ever, is the question, Will man create the mechanical means of his own annihilation?

In the theater, the end of the third act, when the human be-

ings are slain and hordes of expressionless robots, all looking exactly alike, pour onto the stage in triumph, is one of the most exciting scenes in all dramatic literature. At the end of the play comes an Epilogue, which suggests that selfish materialism did not destroy civilization after all but only set it back. Some critics feel that a note of pathos is introduced when the terrifying symbolism is not carried through to a merciless conclusion. Others, however, feel that the destruction of the entire human race except for one man (who cannot reproduce himself) is sufficiently horrifying, and the birth of unselfishness and gallantry, leading to love in the robots, stress the preciousness of these humane values to mankind. Of course, no subsequent action, after the third act, could avoid being to some extent anticlimatic.

Prague, thanks to a good number of gifted and progressive producers, staging artists, actors, and playwrights, was called, at that time, the "capital of theatredom." That first performance of "R.U.R." was a big event for our generation. I still remember the pure lines of Rossum's office and factory architecture in the glass and steel spirit of Le Corbusier.

"R.U.R." and "The Insect Play" were, as Karel said, just technical attempts to write a morality of modern vices. Technical attempts . . ., strangely enough, these two plays won him a world success. Clever, timely, dry of all feelings, they were to show the foolishness of the direction our civilization was taking and the horrors of totalitarianism.

In his play "R.U.R.," Čapek presented, for the first time, a logical picture of the current process of standardization in which the mechanical, totalitarian man, prophesied by Nietsche, had at last become a reality.

Before concluding this address, I should like to revert once more to Čapek, the man I have come to know intimately. He lived on the outskirts of Prague in a semidetached house set in a large garden. Its one half was occupied by him and his wife, the other by his brother Joseph, the painter. Sometime in the

twenties, President Masaryk, residing at Prague's Castle, complained of his being unable to meet writers and journalists privately. You must remember that Masaryk, when professor at Charles University in Prague, had been a dedicated journalist. Then and there, Karel Čapek proposed to the President to come to his house on the outskirts regularly, provided this should suit him. Thus the coterie of the "Friday-men" was incepted (later also frequented by Edward Beneš) where Masaryk deliberated and argued as any other citizen and was briefed on matters close to his heart. Here, Čapek's lovely book *Conversations With T. G. Masaryk* also was incepted.

Karel Čapek's marriage to the actress Olga Scheinpflug was to remain without children. But he was so fond of children that in the thirties, in the trying years of the depression, he founded an organization called *Democracy Unto Children.* He wrote on its behalf and collected funds which provided for children's camps, playgrounds, trips to the seashore, and trips abroad.

Čapek's summer residence was situated in an enchanting woody country corner, fifty miles from Prague. It was a very old house which he had renovated, ensconced in a garden which he himself tended and immortalized in his book *The Gardener's Year.* A small waterfall was there which he wished to channel; however, Munich forestalled this project. In this house Čapek was host to guests from all the world, including such names as Galsworthy, R. G. Wells, Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, and a great number of Americans. There he lived his consummate life and there he wrote; a small statue stands in the garden, dedicated to his memory.

Čapek died on Christmas Eve, 1938, after Munich and before the German occupation of what was left of Czechoslovakia at that time. His untimely death has inflicted a grievous loss not only upon his own country but upon all those with appreciation of the humanities. His creative powers would, beyond any doubt, have developed increasingly if he had lived in a normal world.

Karel Čapek was dead at the age of forty-eight. He could not remain in Czechoslovakia—he said so after Munich—but neither could he have been able to live outside.

The victims of the white sickness have been increased by one more, a heavy and terrible sacrifice.

HENRI PEYRE

Contemporary France Seen Through Her Literature

It is never an easy task to assess the present state of literature in any country. Some of the trends which the future historian, having at his disposal the much-vaunted "perspective of posterity," will pronounce to have been dominant among and around us, will only acquire their significance after they have proved lasting or become embodied in men of unusual talent. A good part of what is experimental or "avant-garde" in a literature or an art may later appear as having been abortive, or as a small byway to which the main force of the literature or art refused to be channeled. Some of the most significant works of an age may not even reach publication (diaries, poems like those of G. M. Hopkins, novels like those of Kafka, letters) in the author's lifetime or may pass totally unnoticed. Any observer, even if he tries to be well-informed, is moreover bound to miss, or to ignore, or to misunderstand some of the most valuable works published under his very eyes.

But the sifting, which we generously leave to posterity to accomplish, has to begin sooner or later. Someone has to prepare it and incur error and ridicule in attempting to appraise and to generalize. If err we must, let it be in good faith and with intellectual honesty, and also with some courage in taking a firm stand, tempered by sympathy for the younger talents. A critic who is reluctant to apply to new works and living authors the standards which he has evolved in judging, after many others, an already explored past or who does not trust his culture and his taste is hardly worthy of the name; the etymology of which implies the gift of cutting, that is, of discerning the good from the bad, the vigorous from the superficial.

But a literary critic is faced by an even more embarrassing task. He knows that literature stands in a certain relation (not precisely definable) to society; that, rightly or wrongly, future readers and foreign readers at this very time see or will see in it a picture of the country and of the age in which it was produced. Social scientists will draw conclusions from literature, rash as those may be. Literary scholars may do likewise and perhaps prove more observant of nuances and less attentive to quantitative data, which are misleading in all that pertains to the life of the mind. In any case, the question cannot be eschewed where France is concerned and wherever French books are read and translated: to what extent does French literature afford a reliably accurate picture of the moods, the aspirations, the problems, and the contradiction which France today is experiencing?

Literature designates among other things an interpretation of life according to a style or a pattern and a peculiarly intense or suggestive use of words. Its aim is to please and to entertain, to produce effects of art and of beauty. It may, in pursuing that aim, escape from the pressing and sordid problems of the present and be content with the laudable task of weaving garlands around reality. Such literature of beauty rather than of power has become secondary in France today and in other countries. Few modern writers condescend to be entertainers. Esthetic debates have lost much of their appeal to the youth. It has been remarked that the "avant-garde," which used to be such a striking feature of French literary life from Romanticism to Surrealism, hardly arouses attention today in Paris. The little magazines and the *cenacles*, which used to play the solemn part of high priests or of midwives to the literature of the future, are no longer taken very seriously. A French author in our age must be a prophet, a thinker, a moralist, even a political guide.

We may lament it. But the present trend is not without precedents, especially in the literature of the eighteenth century. And it is certainly advisable for a literature which is to retain an

audience to be more than form, structure, and art. It must also have a content and be, as it is today, allied to philosophy, though not necessarily its handmaiden. If we can deduce from recent literary works any conclusions on the spirit of contemporary France, it is because French writers have, once again, resolutely faced the basic issues of their age and derived enrichment from philosophy. There is an excess of high seriousness in the French writings of the 1940's and 1950's: it is due in part to the claim of literature to be the rival of religion and to the lofty ambition of modern novelists and dramatists to set themselves up as "forgers of myths," in the Sartrian phrase. Several of the myths by which the modern world has lived were indeed proposed and formulated by men of letters: the myths of progress, of revolution, of the bourgeois, of nature worshipped in the Romantic fashion, of love transposed from books into life according to an insidious "bovarysm." The French writer takes pride in his attempt to be the worthy heir to the eighteenth century philosophers who are credited with preparing the Revolution. He scrutinizes and criticizes his country and his age in the hope that, as Rimbaud put it, he may be able to "changer la vie."

Since men of letters and artists are usually endowed with a keener sensitiveness than average mortals and a fondness for those paradoxes which may turn out to be the truths of tomorrow, we may admit that their achievement affords us the best clue we may have to what the moods of tomorrow may be. In doing so, however, we shall do well to bear in mind a few obvious truths which suffer repetition.

First, in no country and at no time was literature ever a faithful mirror to the average truth of life as people live it or think they live it. Novelists and dramatists have always been fascinated by growth and decadence, which are far more dramatic in individuals, families, in larger social groups than the observation of static organisms would be. Falling in love and falling out of love are more fertile subjects than placid married life. An

American, Tennessee Williams, while rejecting the charge of pessimism flung at him, declared in 1955 that there are three basic problems that people face and that literature therefore dramatizes: "fading beauty in a woman; fading power; fading virility." One could well add ten more subjects to such an incomplete list. The fact remains that much of what is healthy, vigorous, and perhaps most typical in French life or in American life at the present time has to be banned from literature. Passions, emotions, excesses of all kinds of which the average happy reader might, under certain circumstances, be capable are the raw material of all literature.

Second, the trite sentence of André Gide on good intentions making for bad literature need not be recalled. It has encouraged modern writers of many countries to portray horrors in cold blood and to disbelieve all noble feelings and kind intentions, and thus, to falsify life through a childish trend toward "miserabilism," as the French have called it. But the most moral of professors and the dispassionate observer of past and present literature must needs confess that, other things being equal, a book describing evil stands greater chances of survival than one portraying heroism; crime "pays" in literature more surely than generosity and even more than kindness. Perhaps it holds greater depths and covers a more turbid mystery. Probably also the tragic spirit requires, even from epic poets like Dante or Milton, that man does not readily bow to humility or to optimism but, aware of his own greatness, challenges the hostile forces which will strike him in the end.

Third, writers and artists are seldom happy people. Indeed, as an American philosopher observed, if they are so seldom happy in their lives, it is probably because happiness does not interest them. What is more they are obsessed, *des obsedes,* and from their obsession (with their own problems, with their inability to conquer everyday life, with their strong passions, with their sensitiveness, with their creation) springs their creative urge.

They project and, thus, solve after a fashion their obsessions into a work of art. No wonder that they do not feel capable of interesting themselves otherwise than satirically in the average, complacent man and woman, "heureux mais sans histoire." That is even truer of American or of German literature than of French, whose sanity and enjoyment of life seem to remain greater than elsewhere. But of the Parisians it may be said today, qualifying the word "only" that as James Thomson, an arch-pessimist among English poets, put it, "lips only sing when they cannot kiss."

One aspect of French literature, and presumably of French life, has elicited many comments, at times glib and gullible ones, from journalists, travelers, and sociologists: the apathy of a people humiliated by the loss of their former status, unable or perhaps unwilling to evolve a stable government, cherishing individualism even when it verges on anarchy. To be sure, the French reconstruction after four years of occupation has proceeded with anything but apathy and many of the most striking European accomplishments since 1945 have been due to men like Schuman, Monnet, Mendès-France who can hardly be charged with inertia. Frenchmen in general and French intellectuals in particular are fond of professing their lack of confidence in their leaders and in their country's future. The youth is attracted by skepticism as if it were a sign of superior intelligence, or perhaps as a cloak for shyness and for an inveterate idealism which fears to be disappointed. A literary author in France does not antagonize his public as he would elsewhere by assuming an air of superiority to his readers and, more regrettably, to his fictional characters and to the plots in which he entangles them ironically.

It remains true that, after the boundless enthusiasm of the year of liberation, the decade 1946-1956 has been rife with disappointment. That disappointment is visible in literature if one takes care to discover it and to interpret it: for nations, like individuals, are often far better revealed by what they conceal of

themselves than by the features which they display most prominently. It colors much of the political, social, and philosophical literature produced in France since World War II. At times the loftiest philosophical speculations of the French in the last two decades have appeared like an escapist attempt to shy away from the immediacy of the problems baffling them. Four main causes explain that feeling of disappointment.

The first is the magnitude of the defeat suffered by France in 1940 which humiliated the pride long felt by the French in their army, in their ruling classes, in the education of their leaders. For, while that defeat was due to inferior materials and mechanical power, it was also due to a failure of intelligence and of imagination. It took a dozen years or so for the best French minds to become convinced that their country had for several decades been lagging behind some others and that it can now no longer postpone reforming its economy, its industrial and agricultural production and distribution, its colonial system, its armed forces, its civil service, and, as a general prerequisite, its education. We shall indicate below that the most hopeful sign in France today is the generalized awareness among the best minds in the country of the need to effect a peaceful but radical revolution.

A guilt complex can be detected in a number of Frenchmen today. Encouragingly enough, that complex is more candidly confessed in France than among the former Nazis or the former Fascists whose guilt was immeasurably deeper, and who buried it with an alacrity which does not bid fair for their spiritual and political reforming. A number of Frenchmen passively accepted collaboration with the enemy; many more dealt, for a while remorselessly, in the black market; others soothed their consciences through clever sophistry and the fallacious hope that France could play a neutral game between two or more blocs and win out. The psychology of the "collaborator," a magnificent subject for a Balzac or a Zola, has not yet been concretely recreated and interpreted by literature. But a substantial number

of French writers from Celine down to younger fanatics (Abellio, Rebatet), are searching today in literary creation for the transposed expression of a bad conscience.

The third and gravest source of bitterness among the French today is the woeful failure of most of the hopes aroused during and by the Resistance of 1941-1944. In the Resistance movement, physical and moral courage coexisted with idealism and a generous dream of rebirth. Barriers dividing classes seemed to have been abolished. To men and women, who faced daily the perils of torture and death, remolding the country appeared as an almost easy task once the invader would be ejected. Immense plans of reform were then clandestinely sketched. They were soon to be frustrated and abandoned. Material problems were too harrowing from 1945 to 1948, political maturity was rare, the imaginative building of a future fundamentally different from the cherished past attracted too few leaders. Ten years after the end of World War II; it must be acknowledged that the collapse of most of the hopes aroused during the Resistance, the shelving of many of the underground heroes and idealists are among the major causes of disappointment and of cynicism in the country. It has taken approximately ten years for the new generation to come into its own. Our contention is that the second postwar era is now closed and that new hopes are again filling French hearts and a new spirit is being breathed into literature.

Inflation is the fourth major factor which has contributed to the corroding of French courage. It is seldom mentioned or analyzed as such in literature unless it be through the portrayal of decaying families and of ruined estates. Its effect has been slow and undramatic, and fiction, like history, is more apt at seizing the significance of sudden events than of gradual changes. But far too little attention is traditionally granted by literary critics to the relationships in which a writer stands to his public and to the material circumstances in which he creates. Inflation, which has been more or less continuous in France since 1917, has

destroyed the security to which Frenchmen, even those who used to rail at the middle class, traditionally clung. "Insecurity is what makes men think," said Albert Camus. But it makes them think in discontent and often in revolt. Inflation also affected the public of connaisseurs for which dramatists, poets, and novelists once wrote and forced authors to strike harder and to resort to coarse effects in order to capture the attention of a new audience conditioned by mass media.

French writers have always possessed a gift for universalizing their problems and those of their country. The temptation of recent literature to indulge in disillusionment and to depict apathetic and selfish moods was not caused solely by conditions in France. Malraux, Camus, Sartre, and their successors write for an audience which they know to lie for a large part beyond French frontiers. Their works have aroused echoes as far as Japan and Australia. The discontent which they voice is not specifically French; it is cosmic and aims at nothing less than attacking the very conditions of life and at altering man's fate. The significance of much of French literature since 1930 or 1940 is that it has perceived, more acutely than any other, the gravity of the crisis of our mid-century.

All ages have always bemoaned the fact that they were, or believed they were, transitional. But they hoped that their pangs of childbirth would help herald a better era. Many of the woes which they bewailed appeared to be the contrivance of some evil power or the freaks of an ironical and not yet fully controlled nature: plagues, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes like that of Lisbon, famine. With the middle of the twentieth century men are showing less readiness to cast the blame on nature, on Satan, or even on God. They are fully aware of the extent of their responsibility; they know that their fate lies in their own hands to a large extent, and that they have misused their immense power. They do not designate one nation or one regime as the

only one responsible for the horrors of World War II or for the varied degrees of temperature of the tepid or cold war waged since; or they do so with such loud clamors that one suspects they are trying to disguise their inner uncertainty. Even in democratic countries people are aware that they all have to account for decisions taken by their elected leaders, such as the throwing of the atomic bomb or the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb. They are only half-convinced when they assert that their government had to consent to a dire evil as a condition to a greater good. Our philosophers shudder today at the thought of the future. Our most humane geniuses approach death, as did Einstein, repeating that "men are mad" (as he declared to the French minister Jules Moch) and aghast at mankind's refusal to see that only organized peace can save it.

Three of the comforting myths, on which the most optimistic era in man's history had fed, seem to have collapsed simultaneously in the middle decades of our century. Hence the intoxication with the tragic feeling for life which impregnates younger French literature and the naive pride with which the younger generations display their anxiety, reminiscent of their romantic ancestors who carried their hearts in a sling. The first, which Malraux has most powerfully translated into imperious formulas, was the myth of the absolute; the conviction that there exist absolute values, that good and evil, right and wrong do not change according to our place in time and in space, that history is but the unrolling of God's will. That belief was dealt shattering blows in the eighteenth century when truth was described as relative, and history began to give men a sense of perspective which dwindled Swift's and Voltaire's Lilliputian creatures to insignificance. But it did not then inspire the majority of men in the West to doubt their own ability to prepare a better future for their race. They retained an unshattered faith in their civilization and in their ethical standards; they even undertook to spread them to non-European continents through swarms of

emigrants, colonists, and missionaries. It then seemed natural and logical for Western men to want to raise all the other inhabitants of the planet to the level of a civilized Scot, as was said to be Adam Smith's ideal. We know better today and we are much less assured in our faith. History is everywhere around us; each system of beliefs contends it espouses history most closely and incarnates it; it argues that it rides on the wave of the future. We listen to their claims. But we are not convinced and not even sure that we are any longer "hot for certainties in this our life." Art may provide us with a new absolute or with a substitute for erstwhile absolutes as Malraux tries to believe. A new humanism is being devoutly wished for by doctors and quack doctors of the soul. But the pristine faith, once lost, will not be recovered.

Our implication is by no means that religious faith is dead or moribund in France today. On the contrary. Among the intellectuals, in particular, fervor is probably more intense than it has been since the seventeenth century, and purer for having acquired a keener sense of democratic fellowship with the humble and for having rid itself of an insidious lust which lurked in Jesuits and Jansenists alike to control souls. But a very surprising phenomenon has taken place. The religious writers today, and even many ecclesiastics among them, look up with envy to some of the unbelievers and even to the atheists or antitheists whose moral earnestness and awareness of the tragic fate of man are more sincere than those of many a placid, conventionally religious person. Malraux, Camus, Saint-Exupery are more authentic descendants of Pascal than not a few members of the Church. Kierkegaard has more followers among the atheistic existentialists than among the orthodox believers. From Mauriac to Father de Lubac, many are the Catholics in France today who would gladly steal a few pages from existentialist literature. Likewise, religious art among the mass of the believers has become so soulless and so utterly remote from any sacred emotion that the salvation had to come from unbelievers among artists (Matisse,

Braque, Chagall, Leger, etc.). A religious writer on the subject, Father Regamey, in his *Art sacre au XXe siècle* (1952) had to admit, as the inspirer of the magnificent renaissance of Christian art in France, Father Couturier, had already proclaimed that, "with some [notoriously un-Christian] artists, mere equivalents of faith *(suppleances de la foi)* might happen to be more efficacious than the supernatural faith of some other [Christian] artist." Disquietude, anguish, humility, even charity, and certainly the rediscovery of fresh sources of "sacredness" in primitive art of Africa, pre-Colombian America, or Asia are certainly no longer the privilege of orthodox followers of the Christian tradition.

At the end of the seventeenth century in France and England, as the traditional faith in the absolute in religion, ethics, and esthetics was first being sapped, a second myth was evolved which promised from 1750 to 1930 or 1940 to become a religious substitute for the West: the idea of progress. The history of that great myth (by which we mean, not a fallacy, but an idea invested with emotional power and likely to impel men to action) has often been written. It promised peace on earth, fraternity, more justice, a better government, greater comfort through the practical applications of science, and a dynamic purpose for Western man to pursue: the establishment of a millennium on this earth.

The idea of progress did not prevail unchallenged throughout the last century, which counted several of the most ardent pessimists ever known from Schopenhauer to Hardy. But it provided governments, reform and utopian doctrines, education, science with a faith. Two world wars, the brutal regression to inhumanity worse than animality in several authoritarian regimes, Communist tyranny, and, more than anything else, the terrifying success of science in harnessing the power of the atom have shattered the faith in progress in the majority of thinking men today. Fear is everywhere around us; not least in continents like the

American one, which had long remained immune from fear and are perhaps less immunized against it than the Old World. Our belief is that much of it is unjustified and that we suffer from a psychological epidemic which could be put to an end if our spiritual leaders tried hard enough. Indeed, the most challenging task facing us today is the formulation, less utopian than in the age of Condorcet and Shelley, of a new and wise philosophy of progress. But the middle of our century seems to feel that it is aimlessly "wandering between two worlds" and places scant hope in a rewarding future.

The fear afflicting mankind today is not only the apocalyptic terror of catastrophes of a cosmic nature engineered by man's tampering with the elements. It is also, according to the famous and very apt phrase, "the fear of fear itself." A young man of twenty today knows far too much about himself, or about the abysses in himself in which lurk monsters that psychoanalysis has not exorcized or tamed: sex, drink, fear of inner collapse and of disintegration. A familiar character of all western literatures today is the hunted man *(l'homme tragique)* who is ready prey to adolescent temptations, to his passions and his vices, and is frightened by aloneness. Never has the theme of man's solitude even in friendship, even in love, fascinated so many novelists as it does in our socially conscious age of community living.

The romantic writers a century and a half ago or less had already touched upon those subjects, though with less bitter sincerity. They were readier to find a solace in nature, in splendid garlands of words and images and, above all, in the pursuit of success. The third idea or myth, the breakdown of which we seem to observe around ourselves, is the myth of success. "Pourquoi pas moi?" exclaimed the ambitious young Frenchman of 1830 rushing to Paris and hoping to duplicate Napoleon's climb to power, Byron's or Chateaubriand's sudden scaling of the heights of fame. That worship of success—financial, political, social, literary, and in France, naturally feminine which co-

incided with the industrial revolution, spread to other countries with well-known results. Like the myth of progress, it became naturalized in America and soon grew with luxuriant vigor in that Eldorado of unlimited possibilities.

Success has not ceased to be possible, indeed easy, in the America of the 1940's and 1950's. "Go South, young man!" has replaced the "Go West" of earlier years. Even in less fortunate western European countries, fabulous rewards may suddenly come to young people in business, in politics, in the theatre, and to the authors of *The Little World of Don Camillo* or of *Bonjour, Tristesse*. But in spite of a cynicism more apparent than real, the worship of success is more of a lip service affair today than it was a few decades ago. Very few now seem wholeheartedly convinced that having accumulated money, or even having conquered women, having "founded" a family as the phrase goes, having entered, like Proust's hero, the most ritually musty salons of Paris or the most exclusive country clubs of Westchester County, having given the most lavish coming-out parties, is an evidence or a guarantee of success. If recent literature, even when written by fashionable and genteel writers like John P. Marquand, Evelyn Waugh, or Andre Maurois and their ilk, is to be trusted, our contemporaries are no longer assured that conformity and a sizable income make for happiness. Indeed the word "happiness" is seldom used and the equally noble word "pleasure" even more seldom. Stendhal's lifelong cultivation of the delicate art of converting pleasure into happiness is still cherished by a number of Stendhalian French writers; it is not often mentioned and probably not widely practiced in America. Too many disruptive forces, chiefly of a psychological nature and impeding the inner contentment which moderation and wisdom might bring, act upon the individual pursuing success for the sake of forgetting his own self while the pursuit lasts. T. S. Eliot, Faulkner, Proust, Joyce, Sartre have deeply impressed the more cultured elements among the younger generation, who

transmit their standards and their doubts to others. "The Hollow Men" and Mr. Sweeney have become current symbols. The line written in 1921 by W. B. Yeats is echoed today on many a pair of lips, "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold."

The preceding diagnosis may appear sombre to the uninitiated. But it has stressed only one side of a diptych, and the mood of gloom which it has reflected is one which historians of culture have observed in most great civilizations. In France as in the United States today, in Germany yesterday, and in the Italy of the Renaissance, in ancient Greece, and in Palestine, the two contradictory forces of creation and of self-destruction have always worked in parallel fashion. The "Todestrieb" dear to Freudians stands opposite the "Liebestrieb." Nations like individuals seem to derive a bolder impetus from their awareness of the pitfalls of disintegration into which they are in danger of sinking. In the pessimism which has at all times been expressed by American literature and which has lately recurred in France, there is in fact much courage. More than any others at the present time, those literatures have had the boldness to cast aside propaganda and the assuming of masks of fake health. Kierkegaard used to say that as there exist medicines and injections which bring a latent disease to the point where it declares itself and can be cured, there should also be medicines to explode false good health or to tear off its deceitful appearance. Such is the function of great literature which has seldom "fed on the roses and lain on the lilies of life," to quote Tennyson from "Maud," a poem of gloom and madness.

Indeed, the present pessimism of French literature and, if one may venture to deduce that much, of the French people is nothing new. V. S. Pritchett, the English critic, remarked somewhere that literature is always made out of the misfortunes of other people. Indeed a thicker pall of gloom once extended over the literature of France, of England, of America during the early

second half of the nineteenth century (Baudelaire, Flaubert, Zola, Leconte de Lisle, Hardy, Gissing, Hawthorne, Melville). Writers of the present day in France appear as sturdy and healthy when compared to the numerous ones who, in the English eighteenth century supposedly an age of reason and of cheerful enjoyment of life, were mentally deranged (Swift, Cowper, Smart, Clare), obsessed by hypochondria (Pope, Boswell, Sterne), addicted to excesses (Burns), or to visions (Blake). Indeed, the three most persistently gloomy authors now writing in French happen to be three foreigners: the American Julien Green, the Irishman Beckett, the Romanian Cioran. It would be an unnatural and revolting paradox for Frenchmen not to have drawn gloomy conclusions from the sight offered by the years of inhuman torture and of senseless destruction of World War II. Their pessimism voices their realization that all is far from going well, but may be improved if one is indignant enough at the sorry state of things bequeathed to us by our predecessors. It is in truth the same reaction of constructive idealists which implies that the world might be and should be other than it is.

Viewed from another angle, French literature of the last twenty years is one, not of complacently accepted apathy, but of constructive energy. The earlier era of 1910-1930 had been characterized by a universal disintegration which was then needed to save literature from the morass of platitudinous imitation of itself: surely, the worst of all imitations and under the guise of reassuring conventionality the only true form of decadence. Our idea of reality was then disintegrated and the painstaking descriptions of the environment dear to Arnold Bennett and other English realists or to the French naturalists gave way to a magic realism or to the suggestion of translucent halos around mobile and evanescent characters. Our idea of the ego was disintegrated even further by the invasion of literature by psychology. The moral censorship which survived into the beginning of the twentieth century as a residue from Victorianism

also gave way to a greater frankness; new themes like the adolescent, homosexuality, perverse child instincts invaded novels triumphantly. The revolution in painting which started with Cubism and Fauvism, the parallel revolution in sculpture which produced Brancusi and Lipchitz, the Dada and Surrealist movements utterly disintegrated the old artistic conventions and threw most literary rules of structure, orderly succession in time, versification, to the winds.

In contrast with that courageous destruction of the second and third decades of our century, to which we owe Joyce, Proust, Thomas Mann, the years which elapsed since 1930 have been marked by an attempt to rebuild. Malraux, Giono, Saint-Exupery, Montherlant, Bernanos placed will power and the tension of men striving to unite thought and action at the core of their novels and essays. The example of American fiction encouraged the French to shift their stress from introspection and solipsism to violence and the ascent of epic heights by men interested in outside life and in their fellow beings. If the world, in which a second World War was looming as an inescapable folly and in which persecutions were rife in several lands, was declared to be absurd, and human life pronounced meaningless in the midst of such frailty; many Frenchmen, of whom the existentialists have only proved the most vocal, decided that it was up to man to interpret the world anew and to endow his own life with significance.

We shall not dwell here on the esthetic and technical attempts at reconstruction which are discernible in fiction, in the drama, in the determined reduction of painting and sculpture to essentials of our own mid-century. Important as such considerations of form are to artists and writers, the orginal incitement to rebuild had to spring from deeper and more internal sources. "We are betrayed by what is false within," said Meredith in a well-known line of *Modern Love*. The first task was to denounce what, for our age, was false.

The first basis of the reconstruction, which we take to be the ideal of the present French generation, is the desire to perceive and hunt out relentlessly what is "false within." It may be called clear-sightedness. To be sure there is still turgid rhetoric in Bernanos, even in such an acute thinker as Malraux, and intoxication with words in Giono, and even more in Céline. It is good that we should be reminded periodically of how difficult it is for some Frenchmen to reach clarity or even to try in vain for it. But a great many others are hailing today as their literary godfathers Laclos, Benjamin Constant, Stendhal. "Quand je ne vois pas clair, mon univers entier est anéante," Stendhal used to say. Roger Vailland, José Cabanis, Jean-Louis Curtis, and women whose diffidence of all romantic illusions is at least as keen as that of men, Beatrix Beck, Françoise Mallet, Françoise Sagan, Simone de Beauvoir, all agree on one implicit assumption: that seeing clearly into oneself is the prerequisite to any structure to be raised by men in our propaganda ridden age. An excessive eagerness to believe had engulfed the youth of several countries into regimentation behind dictators and the gleeful acceptance of "fresh and joyous war." The conditioning of the masses by commercial publicity in the freest of democratic lands constitutes today one of the direst perils for freedom. Critical spirit which should serve as an antidote to the gullibility of the half-literate is not adequately fostered by education. It has never paralyzed faith, but it has channeled it to constructive courses and deepened it through shunning the reefs of fanaticism. Indeed, with many of those young writers of France, moralists all, clear-sightedness which schoolteachers sometimes present as a commonplace and negative quality has become the object of a passion. Clear thinking, terse and restrained writing, intellectual honesty are cherished with a poignant intensity which a young American poet, Richard Wilbur, in "Ceremony," has best rendered:

There is a poignancy in all things clear,
In the stare of the deer, in the ring of a hammer in the morning.
Seeing a bucket of perfectly lucid water
We fall to imagining prodigious honesties.

A second word recurs persistently in French writings which expresses the intellectual and moral ideal proposed by its spiritual leaders to the youth: sincerity. It would take a whole volume to elucidate the diverse and elusive meanings of the word and the esthetic and moral questions posed by the notion itself. We may attempt to write such an elucidation some day. Certain it is that the middle of the century in France is obsessed by the need for literature to be more sincere than ever before. André Gide placed the problem at the core of all his Protean metamorphoses, and probably never himself reached the sincerity which he was searching through an excessive egotism and a fascination with the mirrors which reflected a distorted image of his poses. Julien Green, Mauriac, Montherlant, Jouhandeau, Cocteau have occasionally rivaled André Gide in their attempts to lay bare the secrets of their lives and in lending to fictional characters and thus liberating some of the monstrous thoughts which, as Goethe once avowed, every man harbors in himself. The drama of Anouilh revolves around the disgust experienced by the youth, a thirst for sincerity and purity in presence of the compromises, lies, and base surrenders of the older generations; the young people, enduring poverty, often misled in their loves, are vindicated in the end because they at least are sincere to themselves. A similar exigency endows the poetry of Eluard, Reverdy, Char with its haughty severity, and repudiates all that was superfluous or extraneous in the poetry of less "sincere" predecessors. Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre place authenticity at the very center of their psychological analyses and of their ethical pronouncements: their novels and their plays relentlessly hunt out bad faith. The defiance of conventional moral standard often

pushed to extremes of brutality by the eternal French urge to "epater le bourgeois," and some desire for publicity stunts, which has gained an ill repute to existentialists novels, should not blind us to their fundamental aspiration, which is to teach men how to "be their own selves true" in a world which has been sullied by lies.

The most difficult of all forms of sincerity is the one of which the individual alone is the judge: sincerity to oneself. It has purged recent letters of much romantic or pseudo-romantic ornament and has convinced many a writer that he, too, like the bullfighter, should run risks in affronting, if not the pointed horns of an infuriated animal, at least the harrowing spikes of his own conscience. The comparison has been made in an essay on "Literature considered as a form of bullfighting" by one of the sincerest authors of any autobiography, Michel Leyris, in *L'Age d'homme.* The sincere writer is, at the very least, aware of what may be mendacious in him, fake or falsely adorned in his art, forced in the expression of his feelings. He would remain an isolated individual with his self-respect recovered and his conscience clear but inefficient, unless he could extend his own example to others or make others equally conscious of their inalienable but often unused power.

Along with clear-sightedness and sincerity, fraternity is the third noble word which may designate the concern of many of the recent French works. The movement of transcendence of the individual is seldom in modern writers directed vertically toward God; prayer, mysticism, communion with the divine are after all private affairs which need not be described in lengthy volumes. But the horizontal transcendence, which projects the individual toward other men, has become the most efficacious form of religion or the most potent substitute for religion among those who reject traditional faith. The existentialists have called it "engagement" or "involvement." They have appropriated the Dostoevskian sentence as their motto, "Man

is responsible for everything before everybody." They have stressed the need for a writer to be prepared not just to live his ideas but to take risks for them and to die for them if needed. The solitary adventurer, obsessed by the quiet beauty of friendship ("virile fraternity" has become the most often quoted phrase) and by the communion with other men gained through the fulfilment of his duty, is the favorite literary hero of our time: Saint-Exupery, Malraux, Jules Roy (Saint-Exupery's spiritual heir as an aviator and as a lyrical novelist of flying), T. E. Lawrence, Ernst Juenger, Ernest Hemingway. The younger group of French authors stands thus at the opposite pole from Proust, Gide, Valery, and others who, aware of the weakening of the traditional structure of their country and prophesying the darkest fate for Western Europe, as did Valery, rested satisfied with diagnosing and portraying the disease, but continued to enjoy the benefits provided by a bourgeois society which they satirized. They are even more remote from Anatole France's suave smiles and graceful resignation. "To live is not to be resigned," Camus asserted. And Sartre, through the devious and at times unconvincing turns of his political attitude, has remained true to one emotion: indignation against evil. In his remarkable analysis, *What Is Literature?*, he had written, "We have been taught to take evil seriously. It is no fault of ours if we lived at a time when torture was a daily occurrence."

One word and one feeling have been almost uniformly absent from French literature since 1940, even from the books like *Le Silence de la mer* and *Lettres à un ami allemand* written by Vercors and Camus during the most arduous days of the German occupation of their country: that word and that feeling is hate. Even then the French intellectuals realized that only through the solidarity of European nations and of Europe with the rest of the world could a recurrence of savagery and an unleashing of man's destroying instincts be curbed. The nostalgic desire of the French for neutralism in the last few years stemmed no doubt

in part from fear of destruction, from an unrealistic desire to avoid facing a gloomy prospect, from the conviction that there was a dynamic, almost mystical appeal in the solidarity of all nations in peaceful coexistence and, that the West was making a psychological mistake in stressing war as a means to peace more than the ultimate peace which was the goal. Whatever may at times be said of the provincialism of French writers and artists and of their naive conviction that Paris is the hub of the planet, it must be acknowledged that their thinking, since 1945, has been universal and consistently aimed at improving man's fate.

No one has voiced the deeper aspirations of a literature which considers itself as the conscience of Western man more eloquently than Albert Camus. A few sentences from his ephemeral, but thought-provoking essays may be quoted in conclusion as the loftiest defense of a French literature which has been too glibly charged with being pessimistic and of literature in general in the world of today.

The first two passages, defining the true significance of the constructive and limited pessimism of many recent works and of the youth of France, run thus:

> We refuse to despair of man. Without having any exaggerated ambition to save him, we hold at least to the idea of serving him. . . . To the last we shall reject a divine charity that would deprive men of the justice which is their due.

And again, after a full exposé of his position:

> Is this pessimism? No. This is an honest effort to determine what is wanted, what is unwanted. . . . We, young Frenchmen, label as pessimists those who say that all goes well and that nothing changes human nature. We call them pessimists, because they are among those from whom nothing can be expected. *They* will be to blame if the world indeed never changes. But there are among us enough men of decision pledged to do all that is within their power to cure the world and themselves of their present sickness.

Elsewhere, in an essay on "The Artist as Witness of Freedom" (1949), Camus took issue with those who fail to see that literature and art have a more valuable function than ever today in a world harried by politics, economics, and social pressure exercised upon the life of the spirit.

> There is no life without dialogue. And in the major part of the world today, dialogue has been replaced by polemics and abuse. . . . The work of art, by the mere fact that it exists, denies the conquests of ideology. . . . The artist has chosen a profession which, in the midst of a world withered by hate, enables every one of us to say in all peace of mind that he is no man's mortal enemy. . . . True artists are on the side of life, not of death. . . Artists bear witness to that in man which refuses to die.

Note. Titles of books and names of authors, which should have been given abundantly, had space allowed, in support of the general assertions and conclusions presented above will be found in the author's volume on *The Contemporary French Novel* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1955). Several of the views developed in this chapter and some of the quotations had already been presented in that volume.

ERNST JOCKERS

Goethe and We

When the people of the Western world celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of Goethe's birth in 1949, one could feel that this was more than one of these officious ceremonies with which the heirs of a great past pay their dutiful tribute to one of their cultural ancestors. Although there was lip service enough, there prevailed on the whole a spirit of sober realism. It was frankly admitted, that despite the immense Goethe literature, the real Goethe was still unknown and, that quite a bit more digging had to be done to remove the many layers of literary rubble and dust with which previous generations had covered him in well-meaning, but, alas, misleading idolization.

It was noteworthy that in some of these celebrations, especially those at Frankfort on the Main and Aspen, Colorado, it was less the poet than the man, scientist and philosopher Goethe, who was the object of discussion. Now and then one could also hear a skeptical question whether the "esthetical optimist Goethe" with his notorious hesitancy to moralize still had a message for our time, whether his *reine Menschlichkeit* ("pure humaneness") still appealed to our hearts hardened by the destruction of World Wars I and II and their horrifying aftermath. Such questioning was by no means cynical. It arose from a deep concern for a new basis of existence on which we could build again after the breakdown of the hitherto sustained values.

Would the real Goethe stand the test of the skeptics? Could he lead us out of the chaos after the sentimentally adorned Goethe allegedly had blinded us against the impending dangers? Would he give us more than beautiful words, poems, and sentences? Would he satisfy our need for a new ethical orientation?

The answer to all these questions is an emphatic yes. And

why? Goethe, long recognized as one of the wisest of all men, is also one of the world's most penetrating explorers of the human soul with all its anxieties and hopes, its depressions and aspirations, its fright of death and its joy of life.

First and foremost in the man, poet, and scientist Goethe is this search for truth which makes of him a disciple of Socrates, Platon, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Kant and, which brings him into the spiritual neighborhood of Christ, Plotinus, and Swedenborg. Truth is the watchward in all his activities, even in poetry. On June 8, 1779, he wrote to his friend Charlotte von Stein, "Nothing is great but the true and the smallest aspect of the true is great." In his *Maxims and Reflexions* we read (1821), "There is wisdom only in truth," and again in 1827, "The first and last thing demanded of a genius is truth; only truth is constructive and to take on truth it takes a higher organ than to defend error."

In his poetic writings he always sacrifices the most beautiful word to the most truthful, the glamorous effect to the honest simplicity of the thing in itself. There is not the slightest envy or hatred in his soul. When offended he is the first to forget and when hurt the first to forgive. There is not a single villain in his whole poetic work and, even his devil is such a jovial human being that the Lord Himself does not refuse to jest with him. Goethe does not ask in which religion one prays as long as prayers are offered in the right spirit and followed by the right deeds. In *Wilhelm Meister's Travels,* the hero Meister, through whom Goethe speaks himself, finds for this attitude the beautiful formula *grosse Gedanken und ein reines Herz* ("great ideas and a pure heart") binding Christ's and Kant's ethics together in one sublime demand.

And finally, there is no other man who so fully embodies the humanistic culture of our Western world as Goethe. He is German born, but proud as he is of his national heritage, the language and an independent burgher's pride especially, he would consider it only as one of the many elements which together

make up his intellectual organism. He took these elements freely from all civilizations which have contributed to what we like to call our Western Humanism. Thus, Goethe became the first good European and, beyond this, the first citizen of a world in which national cultures were integrated in a common spiritual consciousness. He is the towering exponent of this humanism; its most impressive symbol.

This does not mean that he is a model to be followed blindly. He would be the first to reject such doubtful honor. As Faust would say, he is a man with two souls, one of which soars to the sublime "realm of noble ancestors" (Platon's eternal ideas) in rapturous ecstasies while the other "in love's sturdy lust adheres to the world with clutching organs" (*Faust, First Part,* translated by George M. Priest). In our own prosaic language this means: a dual personality, dangerously split between the longing for contemplation and the urge for action, the poet and the statesman, the dreamer and the scientist, the divine and the demonic, both extremes, however, held in check by a tremendous will power and balanced through an extremely sensitive conscience of form. Because of this, one will not find him like Dante, Milton, or Schiller on one side of the fence throwing stones on the other, or to use another simile, on the bench of a stern judge eager to find guilt to satisfy an apriori resentment against life. Goethe is always just, because he sees and hears both sides. Where there is undeniable guilt he is willing to admit extenuating circumstances although never to the extent of effacing personal responsibility. This psychological justice makes of him a pathfinder for Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, the psychoanalysts, and even the existentialists although he would never go along with the Freudian cohort in explaining destructive complexes as sexual or mental repressions only. How deeply he is concerned with the problem of sin or, as he prefers to call it, of guilt, and those of sorrow, care, anxiety, evil, death is demonstrated by such characters as Werther, Weislingen, Clavigo, Faust, Tasso,

Orestes, Egmont, the old Harper, in *Wilhelm Meister* not to forget the prince of all evildoers, Mephistopheles himself. All of these persons represent a veritable scale or, if the expression is permitted, a hierarchy of deviators thrown on the path of wrongdoing not because of a radically evil will but as a result of their incapacity to resist the temptations or coercions of demonic powers stronger than they. Helplessly egocentric as they originally are, they deserve a cure more than punishment. Only if the cure has no effect because of the patient's resistance (as is especially the case with Werther, Clavigo, Egmont, Tasso, and Faust), the latter is either left free to seek his own end or is granted a form of an ennobling death which exonerates him before our hearts. In these and other characters is foreshadowed the *maladie du siécle,* our modern overemphasized schizophrenic disease. In Goethe's view this is not a mere psychological disease, but a reflection of life's quality as such, hence a metaphysical phenomenon behind which there is always the comforting hand of a reconciling power. Consequently, the tragedy of a doomed Goethean hero is not so hopeless as it is for the modern moribund who goes from one destruction to another, from fear and despair to total nothingness. He steps from the night of sorrow and care into the light of freedom and peace.

And yet, in spite of the optimistic note which rings through every tragedy of a Goethean character, the poet takes great pains in reminding us not to become too sentimental about him lest our sympathy degenerate into paralyzing self-pity. "Remember how to live," spoken at the funeral service for Mignon, is one of the great teachings of *Wilhelm Meister.* In harmony with it Goethe always contrasts his "death candidates" with an equal or even higher number of advocates of life, such as Iphigenia, the Princess, and Alphonso in *Torquato Tasso,* Natalie, Lothario, the Abbé, Makarie in *Wilhelm Meister,* Hermann, Dorothea, and Eugenia in *The Natural Daughter* (to mention only a few of them) who will always tell us what to do and where to go at

the crossroads of life. Representing thus, both sides of life, sickness and health, darkness and light, guilt and redemption, God and the devil, Goethe performs that sublime function of justice towards life which the responsible poet has always considered as his highest mission and, in which many of our contemporary writers seem to be deplorably lacking.

Seen in this light our topic "Goethe and We" presents itself in the right perspective. Goethe and we belong together like the center of a circle and its periphery. He is part of our life; consciously or unconsciously we breathe out of his spirit. To know Goethe means to know ourselves. Since the dark days of Attila, Genghis Khan, and Tamurlane our way of life has never been in greater danger than at the present time, and it is not accidental that this danger threatens again from the very same direction whence arose the world shaking hurricanes of former centuries. To resist and overcome this menace we must go back to the fundamentals of our existence and to those leaders who have helped to make it what it is. Goethe is one of them. In fact, he is the one who should appeal to every modern man because he leads without compulsion, convinces without persuasion, frees without boasting, and educates without teaching. He is no moralist, no schoolmaster, and certainly no pontifex maximus who hurls his *anathema* on all those who do not agree with him. He does not curse life and the pleasures it affords because both flow from the same divine hand that has given and maintains all. God's and man's lives are interdependent. One needs the other for its own development. God is not mere passivity satisfied with His own perfection (as is the case with Spinoza's substance), indifferent to the individual's strife and struggle for ever higher stages of independence. God is subject to the same process of evolution with which he stimulates the creative energies of the individuals. He is *natura naturans,* activity, the life of all life, and our own life is nothing else but a testing stone of our God-worthiness, a categorical challenge to act so that we

always remain "in harmony with the infinite," as Emerson, Goethe's disciple, terms it.

In contrast to the prophets of despair and death from Salomo down to James Joyce, Franz Kafka and, yes, even to Thomas Mann, Goethe hails this life as the "living garb of Deity" (The Earth Spirit in *Faust),* as the "colorful reflection" of the eternal (Faust in *Faust, Second Part),* as the "sweet habit of existence" (Egmont), in short, as "the highest gift we have received from God and nature, the rotating movement of the monad about itself, knowing neither pause nor rest, although its specific nature remains a mystery to ourselves and others" *(Maxims and Reflections,* 1822). He is literally in love with this life, regardless whether it be sorrow or joy, loss or gain, struggle or peace. In the end the good always prevails, for such is the wisdom of the Divine Creator that He makes even the devil serve His ultimate purpose: the victory of the spirit over matter and flesh, in Christian terms or, the resurrection of the soul. Goethe thus, is the prophet of life, *der Künder des Lebens,* as the Germans would call it, and there is nothing in this present twilight of values that we need more than such Goethean "yes-saying" to the very same life without which the apostles of doom would not even have a chance to condemn it.

But now let us look a bit more closely to this real Goethe and let us ask why it is justified to see in him the true exponent of our world, the symbol of what we called our Western Humanism. To rightly answer this question we must know what this Western Humanism really means, what it consists of, what it stands for, where it aims at. Metaphorically speaking we may say: it is a dynamic structure—the Cathedral of Learning comes to our mind—in which biblical religion, Greco-Roman classicism, Renaissance, the sciences, and enlightened philosophies of the eighteenth century are integrated in a supranational order of spiritual character. This is also Goethe's world. Its basis is the biblical religion.

Although Goethe has often been called the great heathen, and although he would refuse to be pinned down to one specific creed, he is not only deeply religious but fundamentally a good Christian. From his father, and even more from his mother, he received his first religious education. Friends like Langer, Susanne von Klettenberg, Lavater, and others deepened it during his receptive youth period. The Bible, the center of this education, became his favorite book to which he returned at all stages of his life. There were always two copies of it on his worktable. It inspired the young boy for his first hero worship; David, Jonathan, and Christ Himself being among the first to stir his dramatic imagination. An epic *Christ's Descent to Hell* and a drama *Belsazar* mentioned in *Wilhelm Meister* were the products of this first encounter with the Holy Script.

Under Herder's influence he discovered its poetic beauty, especially that of the Psalms and the Song of Songs. The latter he considered as one of the most beautiful love songs ever written and subsequently translated it. In his later years he did not treat biblical subjects as such but was inspired by them to some of his most sublime creations, viz., "The Prologue in Heaven" and the "Dome Scene" in the first, and, above all, "Faust's Ascension" at the end of the second part of *Faust,* all of them of an unrivaled majestic grandeur. I would like to refer further to the sixth book of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* entitled *Die Schöne Seele* ("The Beautiful Soul") in which Goethe pays tribute to his pietistic friend, Susanne von Klettenberg. From this book flows a stream of religious thought which has a purifying effect on all who directly or indirectly come in touch with the *Schöne Seele. Wilhelm Meister's Travels* and the magnificent autobiography *Poetry and Truth* are fundamentally religious works. The whole second book of the *Travels,* containing the famous "Pedagogical Province," is devoted to religious problems, and *Ehrfurcht,* reverence in its threefold manifestations, for the things above, the things around, and those beneath us, is con-

sidered the core of every religion. The book is introduced by an idyllic scene, "St. Joseph the Second," unfortunately little known and yet of transcendent importance because it shows the practical application of religious principles in the family; the nucleus of society, in general, whose *Hausfrömmigkeit* ("domestic religion") needs only be widened into *Weltfrömmigkeit* ("world religion") to become the foundation of a moral world order.

Shortly before his death Goethe confessed to his friend Eckermann that he owed to the Bible "almost exclusively his whole ethical education." How true this is becomes evident if we realize that his *Iphigenia in Tauris* is permeated with the Christian spirit of forgiveness, and that matrimony in *The Elective Affinities* is considered a sacrament in the strictest Christian conception. To conclude these remarks on Goethe's relation to the Bible, I might call attention to the many biblical and Christian names which appear in his works, such as Elizabeth, Maria, Gabriel, Michael, Rafael, Joseph, Ottilie, to the hierarchy of saints and angels in the closing scene of *Faust,* and to the important roles which both Protestant and Catholic clergymen play in *Hermann and Dorothea, The Tales of the Emigrees, The Natural Daughter,* and *Wilhelm Meister.* Finally, it must not be forgotten that his rich metaphorical style is greatly indebted to Luther's mighty translation of both testaments.

In his youth Goethe once characterized himself as a "decided non-Christian," in his old age he mused that he was probably the only Christian in this world. Contradictions of this kind are frequent in his utterances. Taking into consideration the differences of age and circumstances under which they were made, they may not be so contradictory after all, since in each case he had an ideal religion in mind with which institutional Christianity could compare itself only in especially favorable instances.

It has been said already that Goethe does not adhere to the tenets of one specific church. His religion demands a minimum

of dogma and a maximum of good deeds. Consequently, it can be satisfied anywhere where these conditions prevail. This minimum requirement of dogma and this maximum requirement of good deeds is the prerequisite of our global endeavors to unite all true religions in a spiritual cooperative against atheistic materialism and political tyranny.

If religion is the substance of Goethe's world, Greco-Roman classicism is its first and perhaps most vital element. It has been argued that the ancient world, especially that of Greece, had a stifling effect on Goethe in that it thwarted the creative power of his realistic genius. However this may be, it is clear that the impetuosity of this genius needed a strong curb and, that nowhere could there have been a more efficient and more human form of such restraint than in the ideal of "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" which the great Winckelmann had discovered as the form and norm of classic Greek art and life. Goethe's indebtedness to this classic world is profound, but not so deep going as to make of him a "modern Greek" or even the "harmonious olympian" as many classical sentimentalists want him to be.

Goethe is just as little a Greek as he is a dogmatic Lutheran. Greek art and philosophy were instrumental in overcoming his storm and stress. They balanced his passions and provided him with calm objectivity. They convinced him that the prototypes and laws, *Urformen,* which he was seeking in nature and society were exactly the same creative principles followed by the classic artists and, that art, nature, and society, the constant concern of his own scientific and literary endeavors, were an indissoluble triunity of Greek life and his own classicism. Thus the literary models with which this world provided or for which it inspired him came to him as welcome friends and fulfillers of a deep yearning. To meet them was Platonic reminiscence.

Goethe's approach to this classic world varies in the different periods of his life, not unlike his attitude to the Bible. In his

youth he searches it for titans and superman such as Prometheus, Ganymede, Socrates, and Caesar but lacks experience and patience to complete the projected works. The dynamic pantheism of Heraclitus confirms his own views on the polaric function of life which is reflected in contrasting characters such as Götz and Weislingen, Werther and Albert, Faust and Mephisto, Clavigo and Carlos, or on the female side, Maria and Adelheid in *Götz von Berlichingen.*

With Goethe's growing maturity this dyonisian concept of Greece gives way to the apollinian aspect of "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" for which Homer, Sophocles, Euripides serve as models while Plato's ideas and Aristotle's entelechies furnish the philosophical categories on which it is based. This approach is characteristic of Goethe's real classic period which begins with his entrance into Weimar (1775) and comes to an approximate end after Schiller's death (1805), without however completely vanishing even from such avowedly nonclassical works as *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* or *Faust, Second Part.* It is the period to which belong Goethe's best-known works: *Egmont, Iphigenia, Torquato Tasso, The Natural Daughter, Pandora* in the field of drama, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and *Elective Affinities* in the domain of the novel, *Hermann and Dorothea* in the realm of the epic, and *The Roman Elegies, Venetian Epigrams, Metamorphosis of the Plants,* etc., in the province of lyric and didactic poetry. The most ambitious and comprehensive poetic presentation of the Greek world as it was known to Goethe one finds in the classical "Walpurgisnight" and the "Helena Tragedy" which form the second and third act of *Faust, Second Part.*

There is neither time nor place here to go into a detailed discussion of these works. But some general remarks about their deeper implications and their meaning for us, may not be out of order. It is argued, especially by the existentialists, that Goethe's classicism is too optimistic, too formalistic, and esthetic,

in one word: too aloof to have any significance for our present-day situation. To this we wish to say: first, that it is no crime to be optimistic; that, quite to the contrary, optimism, being the recognition of the fact that goodness is nowhere completely absent, requires more insight into life and infinitely more courage to handle it than the pessimistic view which often is not more than offended vanity, lack of vision, and will to sacrifice. If Iphigenia had not had confidence in truth, in the fundamental goodness of the Barbarian king, in the healing power of prayer, and the benevolence of the gods, she would have plunged herself, her brother, and friend into certain death and the whole country again into a more savage barbarism than that was from which she had freed it through her trust in human nature. I refer only to this example because Iphigenia is considered to be the purest embodiment of Goethe's classicism, but the same could be said of the Princess in *Torquato Tasso*, Dorothea in *Hermann and Dorothea*, *Natalie*, and the sublime Makarie in *Wilhelm Meister*, not to mention such outstanding leaders and educators as the Pastor in *Hermann and Dorothea*, the Abbé Lothario, and the "Oheim" in *Wilhelm Meister*, or the Major in the *Elective Affinities*. They all are optimists. Like Goethe himself they know about the tragedy of life, but like him they know also about its re-creative power, because they believe with him that wounding and healing, like inhaling and exhaling, are only different functions of the same fundamental life process whose purpose is not merely to maintain but to intensify and enhance *steigern* the positive forces through the constant irritation of their negative counterparts.

In answer to the second reproach, that Goethe's classicism is too formalistic, it must be said that nothing could be further from the truth than such criticism. It would be justified if Goethe had "imitated" Greek forms with no other intention than to show his technical skill as playful anacreontics such as Hagedorn, Gleim, and Wieland have done. Anybody who has only a modest

feeling for form must admit that even there where Goethe follows Greek patterns he fills them with his own soul to such a degree that they become vessels for his personal confession. His inner vitalization is not only felt in this treatment of persons and problems but just the same in the individual handling of the metrical forms, such as, the hexameter and trimeter which under his hands assume a rhythmical elasticity of which the mathematically determined cadences of the ancient syllables are scarcely capable.

As to the prevalence of esthetic over ethical considerations, we regret to say that such a reproach can be made only by people who suffer from ethical shortsightedness themselves. One of the finest of Goethe's poems, characteristically enough entitled *Das Göttliche* ("The Divine"), begins with the imperative, *Edel sei der Mensch, hilfreich und gut* ("noble be man, helpful and good"). Another one, entitled *Grenzen der Menschheit* ("Limitations of Mankind"), warns against intellectual pride and arrogance. The cycle *Gott und Welt* ("God and the World"), develops a whole canon of ethics placing with Spinoza all human activities under "the perspective of the eternal" *Sub quadem specie aeternitatis* which means under a guiding principle that, by freeing the good from subjective encroachment, elevates it into the realm of divine necessity. The *Maxims and Reflections* as well as the scientific writings are full of ethical observations and *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* culminates in the sublime Makarie who is the living code of the cosmic and human law which makes of her "an angel of God on earth" whose spiritual organism seems to move to the supranatural "in ever-widening circles." *(W. M. Travels, III, 15).*

And finally, a word on the general reproach of aloofness. It is true, as has been previously mentioned, that Goethe does not teach or preach like Fichte, Schiller, and Kierkegaard. He does not teach because he has too much respect for the individual whose independence he considers sacrosanct. It is out of

Ehrfurcht ("reverence") for this individual that instead of subjugating him to commands and prescriptions, he shows him a human way which, if rightly pursued, leads him to the right goal.

It is obvious that this "esthetic" classicism of Goethe is permeated with unmistakable ethical and religious values, values which are our own and consequently make of this "outmoded" poetic form a living reality with convincing appeal. We may not be able to live with it always, but we just cannot live without it lest we betray our better selves. Faust's union with Helena for the exclusive purpose of esthetic enjoyment does not speak against this interpretation, first, because Faust is not Goethe, and secondly because this whole scene admittedly is a phantasmagoria, a dream, sizzling with such subtle romantic irony that many ears fail to perceive it. The magic play is by no means a positive evaluation of form as such, but just the opposite: a definite turning away from esthetical formalism as demonstrated by the irrevocable departure of Helena from Faust and the latter's incapacity to conjure pure life with the veil of the dying idol.

The second vital element of Goethe's, our Western world, and humanism is the Renaissance. It started in the thirteenth century in Italy from where it conquered the whole of western Europe except Spain. In the sixteenth century it came to a climax in the land of its birth. Its first aim was to revive the past political glory which in Italy, and partly also in France, was identical with the Roman Empire, in Germany and England with national kingdoms. This political aspect was soon overshadowed by the scholarly ambition to revive the ancient languages, especially Latin, and to establish through them a worldly form of life which was to replace the monastic ideal of the church. The first dynamic endeavor appealed to statesmen and poets who were concerned with the nation as a whole. The second more formalistic effort appealed to the scholars who practiced it in academies for their own glorification.

Goethe, averse to all studies dissociated from active life, felt

strongly attracted by the dynamic aspect of the movement. He had an early feeling that he, too, was born to speak and act for a whole people. With the instinct for the vital which characterizes all his activities, he searched his own and other nations for men of the *Lebenskraft* ("vitality") which gave the whole movement its dramatic impact. In so doing he was by no means scrupulous about the facts as such, their historical truth. His was a dynamic concept of truth which needed no other confirmation than its effectiveness in life itself. Men from whom emanated such irresistible energy were symbols of this truth. Lacking any rational explanation of their magnetic power, he called it "demonical." The time of the Renaissance was full of such personalities. The difficulty was not to find but to select them.

The first glimpse into this fascinating world he received in his native city of Frankfurt where the legend of Faust early impressed itself on his dramatic imagination. The coronation of Joseph the Second of Austria, which he secretly attended, furnished the background of imperial pomp from which men like Faust, Paracelsus, Agrippa stood out in bold relief. In Strassburg, which was politically French but culturally still German, Goethe was so overwhelmed by the majestic swing of its Gothic Cathedral that he erroneously attributed the whole of Gothic art to the inventiveness of the German genius. Consequently, he decided to contribute his share in the revival of this genius by awakening *Götz von Berlichingen,* Sickingen, Hans Sachs, and others from their century long sleep. The drama *Götz von Berlichingen,* which thus originated, was not supposed to be an accurate picture of the times as reflected in chronicles and history books but a vital process corresponding to his own impetuous will. Although he did not directly say so, he meant it to be a warning to the German people to be on their guard against rebellion from below, as well as betrayal from above through cunning, treachery, and shrewdly planned tyranny.

The German people did not heed this warning, mistaking an honest boaster for a real leader, they became victims of a sentimental confusion which more than once proved fatal.

Goethe probably would not have had the audacity to be so outspoken in matters of politics and so disrespectful in matters of dramatic form had he not been encouraged by Shakespeare. He became acquainted with Shakespeare's works in Leipzig, but it was only in Strassburg, under the lashing influence of Herder, that he discovered his real greatness as the exponent of nature, the herald of English national power, the very mouthpiece of the *Weltgeist.*

His relationship to Shakespeare is perhaps the most striking example of how one genius awakens another, although both are far apart from each other in time and space. The history of this relationship is so well known to Goethe friends that I can limit myself here to a few remarks which in a general way indicate Goethe's attitude towards Shakespeare in the three main stages of his literary life. During his Storm and Stress period (1770-1775), he acclaims him as the "will of all wills" who "competed with Prometheus" whose "theater is a beautiful rarity chest in which the history of the world passes before our eyes on the invisible thread of time." "His plays turn around the mysterious center which no philosopher has seen or determined, in which the specific essence of our character, the pretended freedom of our will, collides with the inevitable course of the whole." ("Speech for Shakespeare Day," Fall 1771, Frankfort). At the high point of his classicism and friendship with Schiller, he subjects Shakespeare's dramas, especially his *Hamlet,* to a trenchant analysis *(Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship, Books 4 and 5),* and although he still sees in Shakespeare the interpreter of human fate he begins to realize the confusing, if not destructive, effects of dramatic art on real life as evidenced in the novel by Aurelia, Meister himself, and the motley crowd of actors. Considerations of this kind, which made Goethe doubt

the cathartic effect of art, caused him (after Schiller's death) to warn against the unbridled genius who "forced even the stones to shout and cry" *(Shakespeare and no End, 1814),* the very same stones in whose inscrutable silence he revered the untouchable wisdom of the godhead.

Goethe had to depart from Shakespeare because in his opinion Shakespeare remained what he always had been: the colossus of nature, the advocate of English history, while he, Goethe, had grown above his national confines into the higher responsibilities of a good European. Nevertheless, his admiration for Shakespeare as a poet remained unchanged. As late as 1824 he still spoke of him as a "being of a higher order to which he looked up and which he had to revere."

The Netherlandish "Renaissance" with its struggle for national and religious freedom inspired Goethe for his drama, *Egmont,* although it was less the political movement as such which attracted him than the problem how individuals of different status and character acted in or reacted on it. In the last analysis it was a problem of leadership. The tragedy of it is that Egmont, the born leader, forfeits his right to lead because of his uncontrolled temper, his unwillingness to take things seriously and to accept helpful advice. Like Götz, Egmont was meant as a warning but was endowed with such lovable human traits that he, too, was mistaken for the real leader, the cautious and farsighted Oranien, the only Netherlander in the drama who measures up to the demonic greatness of the Spaniard Alba. The Netherlands also gave Goethe the model for his "unholy world bible," his epic *Reinecke Fuchs.* On the surface this work looks like a harmless fable but in reality it is a bitter satyre on human behavior in turbulent times, a mirror in which everyone can find his own image if he is at all concerned with the truth about himself.

Needless to say, Italy, the Eldorado of the Renaissance, had probably a more lasting effect on Goethe than all the other nations together because it was the only foreign country in

which he lived long enough to know it better than his own homeland. Italy performed, as he often said, his "own Renaissance," a reunion *(Widerbegegnen)* with his innermost self. Whatever he saw there seemed to confirm anticipated feelings, his apriori ideas of the beautiful and good. Now these forms stood before him in their eternal grandeur and simplicity, types after which he could model or towards which he could lead his own characters. Iphigenia and Egmont were given the last formal touch; Tasso was reshaped and almost finished; an epic on the death of Achilles and a drama on Nausicaa were planned. Oddly enough, under the same Roman sky the weird *Witches' Kitchen* and the serene monologue "Faust and Cave" of *Faust* were written. In Palermo, Goethe found the law of plant transformation for which he had been searching for a long time. He called it metamorphosis and named the underlying plant substance the *Urpflanze*. He understood it to be an ideal type, not a real plant as it is sometimes erroneously interpreted, a key to the mystery of creation, not unlike Faust's key to the realm of mothers. It opened to him a "world garden," for he was convinced that the principle of "formation and transformation" could be applied "to all other provinces of life," especially to society and art. *The Italian Journey,* the most beautiful travel diary ever written, gives a brilliant account of all these artistic, scientific, and social "conquests" of Goethe in Italy; while the *Roman Elegies,* not written *in* but inspired *by* Italy, reflect the naive life of the ancients in the sensuously ironic style of Catullus and Propertius. The *Venetian Epigrams* written in 1790 on a second, official tour to Italy, cool, critical, even satyrical, dampen somewhat the first enthusiasm; but not the feeling of gratitude for Italy of which, besides his own works, his translation of *Cellini's Autobiography* is a lasting testimony.

When Italy had fulfilled its mission in Goethe's life, its place was taken over again by France which had been his early love. Goethe had a good knowledge of the French language, litera-

ture, and theater; thanks to the excellent instruction by his father, his friendship with Count Thoranc (the royal lieutenant who in the Seven Years' War was billeted at Counselor Goethe's house), and above all, to his own ambitious curiosity. In Leipzig, "the little Paris," as it is called in *Faust,* he behaved like a French gallant and raisonneur, half sentimental and half frivolous as writings of that time, the *Annette Lieder* and the comedies *Caprice of the Lover* and *The Accomplices,* clearly indicate. Ironically enough, this French inclination was momentarily swept aside in French Alsace, no doubt chiefly by the stormy geniuses of Herder and Shakespeare, but certainly not without the collaboration of old German *Volkskunst* and his love for an Alsatian German girl. It was during this time that he ridiculed the French encyclopedists with the exception of Diderot as "pedants of a confusing mechanism" and the *Systéme de la Nature* by de la Mettrie as a "grey, obscure, macabre" specter. Soon after *Götz,* however, the French influence began to assert itself again in order to come to the full fore after Italy.

Italy had given him much, but it could not give him the modern classic drama with which he could counterbalance the dominant influence of Shakespeare thus, establishing an equilibrium between the emotionalism of his own Storm and Stress and the restraint of the Greeks: freedom under ethical law or in one word, dignity. This he found in the French classics. It made no difference to him whether this ethical law was that of the state, as Corneille saw it, or that of aristocratic society, as it was in Racine, or that of critical reason, as it appeared in Voltaire. The only thing which mattered was that there were form and law at all, for he did not conceal from himself the fact that with his *Götz* and partly also with *Egmont,* not to speak of the great fragments of *Prometheus* and *Faust,* he had made himself the standard-bearer of the very same spirit of rebellion which threatened his own equilibrium, and more important than this, the whole European social and political order through the mass

upheaval of the French Revolution. To avert these consequences for his native land, he conjured up the spirit of the French classicists by staging in *Weimar* such works as had been translated adequately, by translating, and having translated others of which there was no German version. Again his first concern in this endeavor was not literature or the theater, but life, political life as he saw it, that means a life of order, security, and peace based, as nature itself is, on lawful progress, slow evolution.

These things we must keep in mind to understand Goethe's negative attitude toward the French Revolution, his great respect, even admiration, for Napoleon in whom, rightly or wrongly, he saw the conqueror of the revolution, the founder of a new peaceful order in a revived Roman Empire based on universal Roman law, of course, under French hegemony. They explain also his skeptical attitude towards the Wars of Liberation, the nationalistic demonstrations of the *Burschenschaften* ("student fraternities"), and many other things for which he has been stigmatised as a reactionary too proud or too self-willed to recognize the democratic aspirations of modern peoples. The truth is that Goethe never was a politician, and that, consequently, he should not be measured with political patterns. He was not concerned with this or that form of state as long as this state guaranteed the individual's right to self development through self-education, respect for others, and responsible activity for the common welfare. In Germany he had to be a monarchist, in Switzerland he would have been a republican. In America, in which he always had a special interest, he could have been a follower of Washington or Jefferson because in each man he would have seen the representative American, the guardian of a law which guaranteed the freedom and dignity of the individual by constitutional authority.

The ethical tendency which is the marrow of Goethe's classical work is also the backbone of his philosophic and scientific endeavors. Philosophy and science, integral elements of our

Western Humanism, we would have to discuss now to round up our delineation of Goethe's world. Since, however, this would go beyond the intended scope of this lecture I shall content myself with a few pertinent remarks. First, as to philosophy. Goethe once said he had "no 'organ' (understanding) for philosophy." This is true if philosophy means abstract, systematic thinking, but wrong, if it is meditation on life itself with its endless "dying and becoming" *(stirb und werde).* His philosophy, contained in essays, and otherwise spread throughout his whole works, is eclectic. It draws freely from other philosophers, especially Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Kant, is aphoristic in form, but, nevertheless, of an imposing organic unity. Like life itself it is not apodictic or one-sided. Problems are always shown through contrasts, from different perspectives; solutions are not readily given but promised as rewards for honest striving. Truth is a way, a goal, not a possession. There is scarcely one aspect of life which this philosophy does not touch; but the individual's adjustment to the social, ethical, and cosmic order, his voluntary submission to laws as emanations from a divine substance, is always of paramount importance. Since this philosophy is not taught from above but lived by persons worthy of our loving respect, it is refreshingly human. It invites us as equals to a discussion of mutual concern.

Honored by such graciousness we feel that our worthiness increases. We are neither disciples of conceited education nor are we objects of analytical experimentation. We feel that we are what we are intended to be, free individuals who create and master their own destiny.

Intimately connected with Goethe's philosophy are his many-sided scientific efforts. In reality, science is his applied philosophy; methods and goal of investigation are the same in both fields: to explain the explorable (phenomenal life) and to bow before the inexplorable in deep reverence. There were times when Goethe considered his scientific investigations more im-

portant than all his poetic achievements together. Of course, this is not really true, but it shows how serious he was in these endeavors. It is only recently that we have learned to understand his scientific, literary, sociological views as an integrated whole and that we understand his classicism as the poetic fruit on this three-branched tree.

The question how far Goethe's scientific findings have been definitely accepted by modern science can only be answered by a real scientist. As far as I can see, there are at least three undisputed contributions which he made to it. First, the discovery of the intermaxillary bone as the connecting link between man and animal (which, however, does not make of Goethe a forerunner of Darwin); second, the discovery of the law of plant transformation, metamorphosis of the *Urpflange* through which he became the founder of modern morphology; third, his theory on the physiological colors which were accepted and advanced by no less an authority than Hermann von Helmholtz. There may be and certainly are other lasting contributions of Goethe to modern science, but this is for the experts to decide. Whatever the latter's verdict may be the fact remains: Goethe's intuitive method has its justification besides the mechanistic interpretation, and it may well be that it knows more about the creative forces of life and its inner intentions than dissecting analysis *(encheiresis naturae)* which destroys the whole, separates the parts, and ignores the spirit. Goethe, no doubt, was tragically wrong in his violent opposition to Newton's theory of light and colors and, perhaps also, in his views on the vertebral origin of the human skull. The way which he followed his scientific investigations was loving penetration and gentle integration with the observed object; this method was and is not wrong. It is the way of the artist and lover who serves nature and is satisfied with what she gives him, while the mechanistic interpreter is like the conqueror who subjugates her in order to exploit and to increase his or others' power. Goethe's

way is idealistic and even religious. It is reverence for nature as the dwelling place of the godhead, the sanctuary of eternal laws and of peace.

If the scientific way is our inescapable fate (atomization leading to total destruction), Goethe's way will always remind us how abundant, free, and beautiful our lives could be if we learned to control the demon of destruction and asserted ourselves again as free beings and masters over matter. One thing is clear. In the conflict of the two views, Goethe, far ahead of his time, saw one of the causes for future conflagrations. To avoid a *bellum omnium contra omnes* (we call it "world war"), he invited the creative minds of other nations to join him in a *Weltliteratur* ("World Literature") which, in reality, was meant to be a world republic in which religion, philosophy, art, literature, science, and industry should cooperate for the preservation of our cultural goods as symbolized in Western Humanism.

After having thus laid the spiritual foundation for a United Nations of the West, Goethe began to extend its sphere by drawing into it part of the medieval and those oriental cultures which the new romantic movement had just discovered as being akin to and, consequently, part of us. The old Flemish and German paintings, churches, and cathedrals as well as the heroic *Nibelungenlied* began to unfold their treasures, and Goethe experienced, to his great astonishment, that freedom, joy in and responsibility for life had not been crushed by the old imperial and catholic systems, that, on the contrary, there had been preserved an element of authority which was essential in the process of restoration after the Revolution had broken all the spiritual bands between the "freed" individuals. By the same token Goethe lost his aversion against the baroque cultures, that of Spain especially; Cervantes and Calderan becoming two favorite writers of his old age.

From Spain, where the Western and Eastern world had produced one of the most original civilizations of the world, it was

only a step, so to speak, into the Orient itself. Persia, the leading Mohammedan nation, and even the faraway China opened their doors and enriched Goethe with their old wisdom on love and peace. The Faust of yonder years became Hatis, Helena gave way to Suleika, and the *West-Eastern Divan,* which thus originated as the sublime duet between two loving souls, is in reality the first poetic attempt to bring the two worlds together for future cooperation, a declaration of cultural solidarity in the face of a clearly anticipated "Mongolian Winter."

To make sure that the old world which showed ominous signs of disintegration was not alone in the threatening conflicts with future *Tamurlanes,* he sent, at the end of his literary career, his most beloved spiritual son, Wilhelm Meister, as ambassador of good will to America with the clear mission to establish beyond the sea a new brotherhood, bound to the old world by the same bond of culture, but surpassing it in ethical fervor to defend their common heritage, Western Humanism. More than anybody, Goethe forsaw the immense role which America was destined to play in future world affairs, and, more than anybody, he was convinced that American dynamic idealism would finish the work in which skeptical disunited Europe had failed: to establish a world order in which the individualistic and authoritarian elements of the Western and Eastern world would be united in peaceful cooperation for a common good, progress under law.

Thus the ring closes. Goethe and we belong together. His world is our world, his poetic vision is our practical goal. Individual and society—West and East must cooperate, lest they destroy each other. As in all human endeavors there are essentially three ways which men again and again have used to reach a coveted goal. Goethe shows us these three ways in three different personalities, leaving the choice entirely to ourselves. The first way is that of Faust, it is will to power which leads to war and ends in destruction. The second way is that of Wilhelm Meister, it is meditation and sympathy which leads to introspec-

tion and ends in fatalism. It is infinitely better than that of Faust but too passive for successful self-assertion. The third way is that of Goethe himself, it is a living synthesis of both: will governed by ideas, ideas impelled by noble motives and tested by good deeds. It is that which he characterizes as the quintessence of his "pure humaneness," his personal form of our Western Humanism: pure activity, a minimum of dogma, and a maximum of good deeds—in the words of Wilhelm Meister at the end of his travels, *Grosse Gedanken und ein reines Herz* ("Great ideas and a pure heart"). There cannot be any doubt as to which way is or should be ours.

RHYS CARPENTER

The Genius of Homer

THE greatest classics in the world's literature tend to escape challenge. Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Vergil, Homer are accepted as great by most of us with the same unquestioning trust that the Bible is accepted for the unchallenged source of our religion. If we are confronted point-blank by the challenge to say why Shakespeare is great, it is not hard to frame an answer; for Shakespeare is so versatile, is outstanding in so many different ways, that it is not hard to put one's finger on things that he does better than others. If someone insists that *Paradise Lost* is monotonous, pretentious and boring, it is a little more difficult to cope with the rebel. Dante, being tremendous in scope and in scale, even if he does not happen to appeal directly and personally to every one, is obviously great. Of one who can see nothing in Vergil it would be fair to ask what he sees in poetry anyway. What then of Homer? Is he really so great? and if great for ancient Greece, for speakers of Greek, was he great enough to be still great for us today after having been turned into English and removed by more than two and one half thousand years from his own civilisation? Is his greatness perhaps nothing more than a tradition, accepted by the Romans from the Greeks, by the European Renaissance from the Romans, and by ourselves from the Renaissance, in a judgment transmitted and imposed more or less uncritically from generation to generation? Or if, almost in spite of the reputation which has been imposed upon him, he is truly great in his own right, we well may ask *why* he is great, and what peculiar gifts or qualities can possibly make him stand out above so many thousands of writers in so many different tongues. That is the question I am setting myself to examine with you this evening, and to see whether I can offer

you any satisfactory answer. Such an answer will not be as easy for mid-twentieth century America as it seems to have been for the nineteenth century English man-of-letters, when Matthew Arnold found no difficulty in appraising the genius of Homeric poetry. But our whole attitude toward poetry has undergone radical change since Matthew Arnold wrote his essay *On Translating Homer.* Amid a public for whom it is possible for T. S. Eliot to write,

"If all time is eternally present, all time is unredeemable. What might have been, is an abstraction remaining a perpetual possibility only in a world of speculation. What might have been and what has been point to one end, which is always present. . . ."

and by merely rearranging the typography, not merely pretend that it is poetry, but succeed in having it hailed as great poetry, when to my thinking it is nothing of the sort but, besides being dull prose, is extremely mediocre metaphysics, it is clear that in trying to discover what is great in Homer, the critic nowadays has the additional task of identifying what it is that constitutes greatness in any poetry, no matter whose it be. So much the better! Let us accept the challenge of the double task.

But first of all, there is the crucial obstacle that Homer's two epics are in Greek and most of us must read him in English. How great an initial obstacle is this to our ultimate understanding of him and our proper appreciation of him?

To any attempt to transfer a literary masterpiece out of one language into another, there is pertinent a typically lucid French witticism which asserts that every translation is like a woman—if faithful, only too apt to be ugly; if beautiful and attractive, then surely not to be trusted. It may be that this does not reflect a very sound verdict on femininity; but alas, it comes very close to being exact and true for literature. The greater any poetry is, the more it tends to go beyond the mere thought and meaning which it contains, because it calls—in the elusive music of assonances and cadences and the voluptuous subtleties of sense

which are the distinctive and unreproducible genius of the particular language, magically and therefore always mysteriously transforming ordinary speech into poetry. How deceptive, for example, is the utter simplicity of the German which Heine uses, and how flat his lyrics sound in English! How little of the curiously thin but exquisitely precise loveliness of French poetry survives redressing in our blunter Anglo-Norman way of talking and thinking! As for Homer, you have only to run through a few pages of any assorted dozen out of the many English versions of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to discover that there is a different flavor, often a startlingly different effect, derivable from each. This has been so dexterously pointed out in the preface to the finest of all prose translations of the *Odyssey*, that it would be competing against perfection if I tried to explain it to you better than Butcher and Lang have already done. I shall save time for what I myself have to say if I here quote their words rather than mine:

" . . . . of Homer there can be no final translation. The taste and the literary habits of each age demand different qualities in poetry, and therefore a different sort of rendering of Homer. To the men of the time of Elizabeth, Homer would have appeared bald . . . . and lacking in ingenuity, if he had been presented in his antique simplicity. For the Elizabethan age, Chapman supplied . . . . the mannerisms that were then deemed of the essence of poetry, namely, daring and luxurious conceits. Thus in Chapman's verse Troy must 'shed her towers for tears of overthrow,' and when the winds toss Odysseus about, their sport must be called 'the horrid tennis.'

"In the age of Anne, 'dignity' and 'correctness' had to be given to Homer, and Pope gave them by aid of his dazzling rhetoric, his antitheses, ... his command of every conventional and favourite artifice. Without Chapman's conceits, Homer's poems would hardly have been what the Elizabethans took for poetry; without Pope's smoothness, and Pope's points, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* would have seemed tame, rude, and harsh in the age of

Anne. These great translations must always live as English poems. As transcripts of Homer they are like pictures drawn from a lost point of view. . . . . Again, when Europe woke to a sense, an almost exaggerated and certainly uncritical sense, of the value of her songs of the people, ... it was commonly said that Homer was a ballad-minstrel, that the translator must imitate the simplicity, and even adopt the formulae of the Ballad. Hence came the renderings of Maginn, the experiments of Mr. Gladstone, and others. . . . . After the belief in the ballad manner follows the recognition of the romantic vein in Homer, and, as a result, came Mr. Worsley's admirable *Odyssey*. . . . . The smoothness of the verse, the wonderful closeness to the original, reproduce all of Homer, in music and in meaning, that can be rendered in English verse. . . . .

" . . . . without this music of verse, only a half truth about Homer can be told, but then it is that half of the truth which . . . . the translators who use verse cannot easily tell. [They *must* be adding to Homer, talking with Pope about 'tracing the mazy lev'ret o'er the lawn,' or with Mr. Worsley about the islands that are 'stars of the blue Aegean,' or with Dr. Hawtrey about 'the earth's soft arms,' when Homer says nothing at all about the 'mazy lev'ret,' or the 'stars of the blue Aegean,' or the 'soft arms' of earth. It would be impertinent indeed to blame any of these translations in their place. They give that which the romantic reader of poetry, or the student of the age of Anne, looks for in verse; and without tags of this sort, a translation of Homer in verse cannot well be made to hold together.] Yet a prose translation of poetry is not poetry!

"There can be then, it appears, no final English translation of Homer. In each there must be, in addition to what is Greek and eternal, the element of what is modern, personal, and fleeting."

Perhaps the only way to penetrate such a screen of individual styles, unavoidably erected between us readers of English and the original Greek Poet, would be for me to try to tell you

what the Greek itself feels like, what I sense in it that I cannot derive (through no fault of theirs) from any of its translators. First there is the sound,—and this is a curious thing to say, because no one today can claim that he knows what ancient Greek sounded like! And yet, if you will allow a musical metaphor from the transposition of a melody and its accompaniment from one key into another, there is a sort of equivalence to the true ancient Greek that we moderns can obtain if we are familiar with the present-day manner of speech among the living Greeks and take some philological rules into account for transposing this back into antiquity. In spite of the absurdity of appealing to a language that none of us know how to pronounce properly, so that no one today can make Homer sound as the ancient Greeks recited him, I am going to read you some Homer in Greek and insist that in my voice you will hear something that no English version could have, and that what you are hearing bears some sort of point-for-point relationship to what an ancient audience might have heard. But I must further preface my reading by saying that there is another obstacle equally full of pitfalls,—and that is the metre, the Homeric dactylic hexameter, which possesses a wonderful intricacy of patterns and shifting rhythms within a single rigidly prescribed framework that never varies through all the twenty-seven thousand lines of the two poems. And here I hope you will forgive a moment's over-scholarly discussion of my subject.

There are no Homeric hexameters in English poetry . . . . and could not be any. We build verse by using words as they are ordinarily pronounced in prose speech, which means primarily by observing the stress with which we bring out certain syllables over others. A neighboring city, which you all know, cannot be Cíncinnati nor Cincínnati nor Cincinnatí, whether its name be used in prose or in verse, in conversation or in literature, because the heavy stress of voice makes it Cincinnáti.

"By Allegheny's waters the town of Pittsburgh stands" is a

miserable verse of my own momentary improvising; but everyone who allowed it to be a verse at all, would read it in much the same way and hear exactly the same metre in it. In Greek and Latin verse, words may be mispronounced as completely as we permit English to be mispronounced when it is sung; for the Greek poetry grew out of singing and kept its quarter notes and eighth notes to build up its bars, much as our music does. One Greek metre could differ from another almost as strikingly as waltz-music differs from march-music or the two-step. Consequently, to preserve its character, Greek verse should be intoned more or less singingly, rather than read conversationally like English verse. In addition, the Greek hexameter should not be cut with a pause in the middle of every line—which is the way (I regret to say) that our Greek students are taught to read it. Actually, the lines were subject to musical phrasing and had wonderfully shifting rhythms which set off every verse in one out of a dozen different available patterns, where our schoolboy reads them all to one identical and hopelessly monotonous rhythm.

Now that you know what to listen for, I shall do my best to overcome the inevitable embarassment which inhibits such a performance by an untrained amateur before a large audience, and read you some verses from the *Iliad:*

Τὸν δ'ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς·
"διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ,
χρὴ μὲν δὴ τὸν μῦθον ἀπηλεγέως ἀποειπεῖν,
ᾗ περ δὴ φρονέω τε καὶ ὡς τετελεσμένον ἔσται,
ὡς μή μοι τρύζητε παρήμενοι ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος·

Ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Ἀΐδαο πύλῃσιν,
ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθῃ ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπῃ.

Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα·
οὔτ' ἔμεγ' Ἀτρεΐδην Ἀγαμέμνονα πεισέμεν οἴω

οὔτ᾽ ἄλλους Δαναούς, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἄρα τις χάρις ἦεν
μάρνασθαι δηΐοισιν ἐπ᾽ ἀνδράσι νωλεμὲς αἰεί.

Ἴση μοῖρα μένοντι, καὶ εἰ μάλα τις πολεμίζοι·
ἐν δὲ ἰῇ τιμῇ ἠμὲν κακὸς ἠδὲ καὶ ἐσθλός·
κάτθαν᾽ ὁμῶς ὅ τ᾽ ἀεργὸς ἀνὴρ ὅ τε πολλὰ ἐοργώς.

—*Iliad* IX, 307 ff.

If I have caught anything of the original shift of patterns and cadences, you will see that this aspect of the Homeric genius could not survive into English, since no English poet (not even Milton) can show any comparable effects. But of what use is it for an English reader to be told how musical and rhythmical is the Greek which he cannot read? There is at least this much of value in such an assurance, that we must hesitate to accuse these poems of any monotony or dullness in their poetical language. Yet in translation, the *Iliad*—throughout which, unlike the *Odyssey,* the listener is not continually held on the suspense of a story tensely stretched—the *Iliad* can become extremely monotonous. There is too much fighting, in which nothing is achieved except battle, murder, and sudden death. In the opening scene of the poem Achilles withdraws from the Greek cause in sullen rage, and we wait in vain through book after book for anything to happen which will affect this crucial displacement of the hero that debars him from the action on which we know the whole poem must turn. So striking is this arresting of all movement of the plot in the midst of the violent movement of minor incidents and events of the battlefield, that one modern critic was led to characterize the *Iliad* as a first-rate poem on a third-rate story. Other scholars, under the conviction that the poem has been enormously built-up and inflated—as we are apt to say, padded,—have insisted that it conceals within itself an older original poem which stuck to the story and unfolded essentially the same plot in hardly one-third as many verses. Certainly, if

this is what one set out to do, to make an abridged edition of the *Iliad* with all extraneous incidents left out, in close concentration on the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles; then, after the slaying of Achilles' comrade Patroklos, the consequent shift of Achilles' wrath away from his own commander in chief, who had insulted him, to the leading warrior of the Trojan enemy, who has killed his best friend; the meeting of these two,—Achilles and Hektor,—in combat to the death; and, with revenge for Patroklos thus achieved in slaying his slayer, the final reconciliation of Achilles with his own commander, King Agamemnon . . . . if this were the version which one set out to make, one could indeed cut out and throw away two thirds of the poem. But this very observation should give us pause, since it must force us to stop and ask ourselves, "Are poems made just for the sake of the story which they tell?"

And yet on the other hand, what else beside the plot is the *Iliad* intended to convey? Is it just a picture of war, a great tapestry of unconnected battle-scenes whose very disconnectedness accumulates itself into an overwhelming impression of the terrible unplanned *melée* of battle in which men have come to kill other men or be killed themselves? To take this attitude toward the poem is to misjudge the *Iliad* quite as much as do those who complain that it is feeble because it neglects its own plot.

If those of us who have reached that backward-glancing stage of our earthly existence which is politely called "advanced middle-age," decided from a review of our past that only those very occasional moments when something violent or sudden or decisive happened to us, really made up our lives, most of us (I fear) would have to admit that we scarcely had lived at all, because the story of our lives has not been very much of a story. For most of us it has proven to possess, even more than the *Iliad*, a third-rate plot. Yet we are not utterly smitten and depressed thereby, because we know that human life has had more to offer

than the transitory excitement of those adventures which it has rather consistently withheld. But very few of us could ever manage to tell another person what our life—apart from such occasional external happenings—has been to us, what it has been like to live it, how it has felt, good and bad, in contentment and grief, in happiness and sorrow, resentment and delight. Perhaps, because we cannot tell others and others cannot tell us, this is why so many of us read novels—unreal pretences of life and of living beings which we value because, in spite of their acknowledged unreality, they somehow are real to us. Some of these novels are highly descriptive: they tell us in great detail all the material setting of towns and streets and houses, rooms and furnishings, bric-a-brac and tableware, amid which their characters move. Then also, they proceed from the visible to the invisible, and explain every mood and thought and motive inside the heads and hearts of the various human beings whom they have first described to us externally in their features and stature and bodily traits and even clothes, costumes and accessories. In this way they try to give us every opportunity to take a sympathetic part in life as they think it actually goes on. Perhaps such a method works; and if the dead bones can be made to carry flesh and blood, no doubt we expand our own lives by living inside these imaginary other people. But there is always the risk that making a complete inventory by describing everything minutely, is not the way to communicate the emotional sense of a scene or a person or a thought or an action. The Homer who composed the *Iliad* does not describe either his characters or his scenery. Yet he imparts, as though accidentally, an extraordinary amount of information, so that, for example, after reading the *Iliad* we can almost make a map of the few square miles of countryside wherein the essential action of the poem takes place. But when we come to search these details out, we find that there is nowhere a description either of all of the scene or of any coherent part of it; but merely allusions, from which we supply our sense of

what is there and, bit by bit, without quite realizing how, pick up the essential details in tiny picturesque scraps that happen to attach to some human incident. This is the same trait that you will find also in Greek art, where the pictures and the sculpture concentrate on human beings and ignore what we call Nature or scenery; and yet, here too, there are little scraps of the world outside of human beings that attach themselves to them to explain a pose or indicate a setting, out of doors or in. It is thus that in the *Iliad* everything is presented primarily in human terms: always it is what men or women are doing, what they are saying; and only as they themselves drag the inanimate world into their actions or into their speaking, do we move beyond them, lightly and momentarily, to their surroundings. You may think that this is a serious mistake in method; but it goes hand in hand with such an art as, in modern times, the stage-production of plays, where I am sure that you have all perceived that the more intensely actual the characters are, the less helpful it is to surround them with elaborate scenery or clothe them in elaborate costume. The seemingly perverse idea of presenting Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in modern dress hinges partly on this consideration.

What is perhaps the most extraordinary of all Homeric mannerisms is connected with this deliberate avoidance of scenic description. For there are, even in the *Iliad* (and *especially* in the *Iliad)* very vivid descriptions of scenery, but they are never of the scene where the action is taking place. They are descriptions of some imaginary locality whose whereabouts is never precisely specified, and which, in any case, has nothing to do with the plot of the poem. They are invariably introduced in the form of similes, being merely comparisons designed to heighten the vividness of an action and relieve a threatened monotony from too much moil and toil of fighting. You must listen to a typical example, in order to see how they work and how peculiarly Homeric they are:—

The Trojans have at last broken through the Greek ranks and set fire to one of the Greek ships drawn up on the beach. It is this disaster which rouses Achilles from his dudgeon and impels him to send his comrade Patroklos to rescue the imperiled Greek cause. So Patroklos drives the Trojans (and now I am translating)

"away from the ships; and he quenched the blazing fire. And there the half-burnt ship was left, while the Trojans fled with a mighty din and the Greeks poured in behind them among the hollow ships with unchecked shouting."

This is one of the turning points of the whole narrative; yet you will see that there is no description in it, except of the movement of the fighters. The fire which was blazing is simply "put out"; the ship which was afire is merely referred to as "half burnt." The other intact vessels which have escaped the fire raid are merely "the hollow ships." Perhaps this seemed pictorially too bleak even to the Greek epic poet. At any rate, there is a sudden change in emphasis; for the poem goes on immediately,—

"As when from the high peak of a great mountain the lightning-gatherer Zeus sets the thick fog-cloud moving, till all the watching-points of the heights and then the steep-pitched ridges and then the mountain-valleys emerge and stand out, as the limitless clear sky breaks forth on the heaven,—so paused the Greeks" when they had cleared the ships of the fire-bringing foe. A wonderful description, but not a description of the river-plain of Troy at all. It is the yielding Trojans who are the retreating fog from the hill-crests; and it is the panting Greeks, pausing in the sudden quiet after the fire has been quenched and the attack beaten off, who are the clear sky spreading wide over heaven. It is this curious refusal to go into the details of long material description but to suggest everything by an all-but-irrelevant picture of something else, which gives you a direct glimpse at one of the secrets of the Homeric genius.

Next let me show you how, in the *Iliad,* human character comes out clear and vivid by the same trick of not being described directly, but by being alluded to indirectly, so that it is understood through some trait of révelatory behavior. The Homeric characters are completely unaware that you and I are staring at them and watching them while they talk to each other. Let me illustrate this for you with a short passage or two:

(Hektor, the chief champion of Troy against the Greeks, has left the field of battle to bid the old men and the women in Troy supplicate the gods for help, since the fight is going against them.)

"Now, when Hektor reached the oak tree by the Skaian gates there ran crowding about him the wives and daughters of the Trojans to ask for news of their sons, their brothers, their lovers, their husbands. But he only bade them pray to their gods; and sorrow was hung upon them. But when he reached Priam's fair palace with its columns of polished stone . . . his mother met him; and she put his hand in hers and called his name, and said, 'My son, why have you left the fierce battle and come hither? Tarry, tarry, and I will bring you honey-sweet wine, that you may first pour of it to Zeus and the other deathless gods, and then drink of it to refresh you. When a man is tired, even as you are tired from fighting, wine will restore his strength.' But Hektor of the flashing helmet answered her, 'Bring me no honey-hearted wine, O lady my mother! lest you break my courage and make me forget my strength. With hands unwashed I will pour no wine to God; nor shall one pray to the god of the stormcloud while still splashed with blood and mire. Go you, therefore, with the old women to Athena's temple and bring her for offering the best and most beautiful gown in the palace, put it on the knees of Athena the fair-haired, and vow to her twelve sleek ungoaded kine, in hope that she may have mercy on Troy and the women of Troy and the little children.' "

Do you mark how vivid this is? how swiftly it moves? how it

says just what is best calculated to make you feel a desperate urgency in a threatened city? No long-winded descriptions of streets and houses and topography, but just a mention of an oak tree at the city-gates, of polished stone in the columns of the king's palace, and a hint that Athena's statue on the knees of which a robe was to be placed as a placatory offering, showed her seated and that the statue had brightly colored hair. No long-winded description of people, how they were dressed, what they had been doing—only a short sharp mention of the women crowding around Hektor, much as the women today will crowd around a mine-pit mouth for news of their men underground in some accident. And how better could Hektor's mother show her pride and anxiety and worry for her heroic son than by saying what she does? And there was no description of her at all; and none has been given anywhere earlier in the poem. Her name is not even mentioned here, though every ancient listener would have recognised her for Priam's queen, Hekabe. And nothing is said about her dress or gait or feelings. Suddenly there she is, in front of Hektor. But who does not see her and know what she looked like, and how she felt in her pride of her warrior son and in agonised fear for his life?

My second passage is even more famous and has justly been quoted again and again. The adulterous elopement of Helen with Paris, prince of Troy, was the immediate occasion of the Trojan War. And after the Greek host has landed and is encamped upon the shore of the Hellespont, Helen is still living with her lover Paris in the high palace-quarters of Priam behind the city walls of Troy. Yet two books of the *Iliad* are filled with Agamemnon and Achilles and his mother Thetis and all the assembling and marshaling of the two armies for battle before we even catch a glimpse of the fair lady for whose recapture all these Greeks have come. Then suddenly we see her in her own room weaving a purple garment on a great loom and working in designs of the fighting "between Trojans, who are masters of horses, and

Greeks, who wear corselets of bronze," when a thought is put in her mind about these very warriors whom she is picturing in her handiwork, when she hears that her old husband, Menelaos, is to fight her present lord, Paris, in single combat for possession of her. So she draws her white linen veil over her head and half-tearfully hurries to the city ramparts, where sit the chief Trojan elders, those who are too old for battle, but wise enough to give counsel,—

"having ceased from war because of age; yet excellent men of assembly were they, even like cicadas that sit on a tree in the woodland and utter their shrill thin note. So sat they, the Trojan leaders, on the rampart, and when they saw Helen approaching, quietly they said among themselves, 'no wonder it is, if Trojans and mail-clad Greeks endure long hardship for a woman such as this, since she is direful like the deathless goddesses to look upon. And yet, even though such she be, let her go away from us in the ships, that she bring not calamity upon us and our children hereafter!' "

Did Homer know (or was it only poet's instinct and the traditions of Greek epic that made him do it?)—how much more wonderful it was to show Helen's beauty by inference through old men's regretful but still susceptible eyes, than it would be to make his audience listen while he told them the tilt of her nose and the shape of her mouth and the color of her hair! In all the *Iliad* no one ever tells us what Helen really looked like; in the course of the forty times that her name is mentioned, we casually gather only that her arms were white, that her hair was fair to see, and that she dressed in white. Yet somehow we feel, as did the wistful old men on the Trojan wall-top, that she was so beautiful a creature that she was worth all the trouble of the war that she had brought, and that no one need be blamed for anything he did on her account!

However, Helen is not the heroine, not even one of the chief characters of the *Iliad;* and this might be thought to explain the

poet's reticence about her. In half of the twenty-four cantos of the poem her name is not mentioned. Who then are the leading persons of the poem? As might perhaps be expected in a battle-piece, they are not the women, but the men. But again, some of these, however large they bulk at times in the narrative, are not really characters dramatically involved in the plot, but only professional fighters. The *Iliad* frankly loves battle and is eager to tell you just what part of a face or a body is struck or pierced or hewn to pieces. It is not fair to say that its temper is blood-thirsty or sadistic or even unthinkingly cruel. Rather it is exultant over the strength and skill of mortal hand-to-hand conflict. And if a modern reader cannot bring to the *Iliad* that same sense of joy in terrible triumph, there is much that he will have to skip or skim over. What remains is a marvelous study of men's characters in full-tempered action—but again, not analysed and picked apart or even described in terms of inner feelings, but given to us to watch from the outside precisely as it has to be done on the stage where no one can pause to tell us how the characters are feeling or thinking except as they themselves can tell us by speaking out loud to themselves and to others while they enact their stage-business of covert deed or open violence.

That is the surprising thing about the *Iliad*,—that it pretends to be a story, that it goes on narrating to us incident after incident, and yet all the time is really at heart a drama, as detached from its author as though it were a play. I do not know, in precise statistics, exactly how many of its more than fifteen thousand lines are to be printed within quotation marks to show that not the narrating poet but one of his characters is speaking; but I should suppose that one would find very nearly half of the poem is thus put into the mouths of the people within the story. In such a scene as the visit of the three Greek warriors who try in vain to persuade Achilles to come back on the Greek side and fight against the Trojans, four fifths of the canto is speech-

making; and even in the books that are filled with battle scenes, the victors and vanquished have to talk almost as much as they fight. Such a division of the author's and audience's attention between narrative and character-talk would perhaps be thought a great source of weakness, in that it inevitably interrupts the action and slows down the story. Certainly, one almost feels oneself in the Lewis Carroll world where Tweedledum can look at his watch, find it is half-past four, and suggest to Tweedledee, "Let's fight till six, and then have dinner," when in the sixth book of the *Iliad* one is told how Glaukos and Diomede come together between the two armies, eager for battle, but before hurling their lances at each other, pause to make sure that they know whom each is fighting, and so fall to telling family history for a hundred verses while all the great battle before Troy fades into inactivity and is made still more pointless when the two heroes, discovering that they are old family-friends, decide that they will not fight each other after all! Even in the final climax of the entire poem, when Achilles slays Hektor in vengeance for Hektor's slaying of Achilles' bosom-friend Patroklos, the two great warriors confronting each other in mortal contest talk through more verses than they fight. To be sure, that has always been the way of the Greek, to talk more than he acts; but it is a misapprehension to bring this up against the *Iliad* in criticism, because the genius of such poetry is truly and deeply centered in this most human of all human traits, speech,—wherewith, most of all, human beings betray their real being and (if they have it) their humanity. So there through the long poem the warriors (and occasionally their women) come before us and talk themselves out; and what they say is not the idle chitchat of a modern comedy of manners, but the direct, sometimes noble and sometimes ignoble, speech of naked souls, every one of whom stands in mortal danger of slavery or death. That is the *Iliad;* and in that direct and vivid humanity lies its genius as a great piece of literature.

In the somewhat shorter companion-piece, the *Odyssey,* there is deliberately a different tone and another spirit. Though the poem is named for its hero, Odysseus (whereas the *Iliad* takes its title from one of the names of Troy), there is no scrutiny or display of that hero's character to match the *Iliad's* wonderful elaboration of the petty weaknesses which hide (and in the end uncover) the true grandeur of Achilles. In the *Iliad* "the play's the thing"; in the *Odyssey* the keynote is adventure. If it is perhaps unallowable for any normal modern reader to take a truly Homeric delight in the slaughter of battle, no matter how fairly it be performed in well-matched hand-to-hand combat, all of us today can still (and rightly) thrill to exploits of adventure in far-away dangerous places and to the struggle of men against the sea. I can see no argument for holding that anyone today could fail to be moved and excited by the *Odyssey.*

But the really strange thing about this poem is not that it is a narrative of exploit and adventure, but that, whereas most of it is conceived almost like a novel, describing the struggle of three men at a great disadvantage who outmaneuvre and finally triumph over the much more numerous band of their opponents, the rest of the poem (about half as great in bulk) is a fairy-tale. And nearly half of this fairy-tale is told as a story within the story, with Odysseus himself as the narrator. In the *Iliad* the plot is so simple that, though the scene changes occasionally from the environment of Troy to the top of Mount Olympos or the bottom of the sea where Achilles' mother, the mermaid, lives, and various characters occasionally tell digressive stories about themselves, the action is absolutely straightforward and consecutive from Achilles' first sulking fit of rage to his final forgiveness of the Greeks with whom he had quarreled and the Trojans who had killed his best friend. But the *Odyssey* keeps weaving together and again pulling apart three wholly different stories. The first tells how Odysseus' only son Telemachos journeyed from Ithaca to seek some word about his missing father

and, having failed in his object, returned to his native island,—barely escaping death at the hands of the band of suitors who are trying to persuade Odysseus' wife Penelope that she should consider herself a widow and remarry, and in this connection are themselves interested in removing the heir to the family fortune, the young Telemachos of whom I am telling. That is one story. The second story takes us far away, out into the mysterious western Mediterranean Sea which the Greeks of Homer's time were just beginning to explore beyond near-by southern Italy, past the great islands on the long way to Spain and the Atlantic beyond the Gibraltar Straits. Out into that vague and vast expanse of land, sky, and especially water, Odysseus with all his warrior followers had been blown by tempest after they had started home from captured ransacked Troy. It is there, in the remote and unknown West where anything might be true, that the *Odyssey* tells its fairy-stories of adventure with the giant ogre who lives in a cave and eats tiny men raw; and the king of the winds who sits at table feasting with his windy family and can stuff tempests inside a leather bag; and the fearful Brobdignagian people who spear visitors as though they were fish; and the beautiful singing witch in her fairy-haunted house who turns men into swine by putting a poison drug in their drink and touching them with a magic wand; and the Sirens who lure ships and their crews to be wrecked; and Scylla who seems to be some sort of devil-fish whose huge tentacles grab sailors from the deck of their ship; and Charybdis, the maelstrom that sucks everything down and lays bare the sea-bottom three times in every day. How Odysseus ran the gauntlet of all these terrible creatures, though he lost every one of his shipmates in doing it, and how he was finally shipwrecked on a solitary island where he lived for seven years with a beautiful fairy-woman in a cave, and how he at last came home to Ithaca,—all this is the second story. And the third story is a still grimmer one, because we have only half-believed in the witches

and ogres, but must give our entire credence to the final tale of real human beings of flesh and blood,—blood that will flow in red gallons over the floor of the eating-hall of Odysseus' palace as Odysseus and his son Telemachos and the humble swineherd succeed in their conspiracy and slaughter every one of the one hundred and eight suitors who have been devouring the hero's herds in endless feasting. This is the third and last of the three stories. And though it is true that the first story is mainly told in the opening four cantos, and the second story in the next nine cantos, and the third story in the second half of the poem in eleven more cantos, there is an intricate changing of place and a moving backward and forward in time, which makes the *Odyssey* a triumph of construction of plot such as has few equals in the world's literature.

The best thing to do with fairy-stories if they are well told, is to listen to them. But since there is neither time nor moral justification for reading them to you this evening, I shall have to leave that magical part of the *Odyssey* out of count, contenting myself with remarking that if you have never read them, you will discover in cantos V-XII of the *Odyssey* some of the best-told fairy-tales that you can find anywhere. I cannot say whether they are in themselves the best of all fairy-stories, because they have formidable rivals in other folk-tales in other languages; but not even the *Arabian Nights* at their best succeed in telling anything more convincingly, more vividly, more absorbingly than Homer.

But though it is probably such adventures as that with the one-eyed Cyclops or the meeting of Odysseus with the fairy-princess Nausikaa in the land of the Phaeacians which come most immediately to the mind of anyone who has read the *Odyssey*, it is none the less true that four-fifths of the poem is devoted to other matters; so that its final reputation should perhaps be made to depend on its success as a novel rather than as a collection of folk-tales. How good is the main body of the

poem? and, if it is really very good, what is it that makes it so?

Certainly, nothing in any diversity or complexity of the main plot, because the only possible climax is the slaying of the suitors, which every reader or listener divines from the very outset is the only possible outcome. There are not even diversions or setbacks or minor plots within the main one. Quite the contrary, it is the grim wholeheartedness with which the story doggedly and unwaveringly trudges toward its murderous goal which makes it so gripping. There is the same horrible fascination that there is in watching an accident take place, when one sees beforehand that it is going to happen and yet can do nothing whatever to prevent it. We cannot be sympathetic with the arrogant and heartless suitors; and yet there may be an instinctive sense within us which makes us wish that we could warn them to stop their folly before utter disaster overtakes them. But the poet seems to have sensed the possibility of such a feeling among his listeners and stepped in to block even this tacit resistance to his terribly quiet and remorseless gathering of destruction. Advisedly I say, "terribly quiet." Let me briefly review for you this extraordinary quality, which pervades the entire second half of the poem.

An aging travel-battered man is put ashore fast asleep in a hidden cove of his native island of Ithaca. When he awakes and realises where he is, he climbs a rough track through wooded heights to a remote farmhouse where an old devoted tenant of his still lives in safe seclusion, breeding and tending his herds of pigs. So unsure of everything is old Odysseus that he does not even venture to tell this swineherd who he is, but satisfies his curiosity with a long and completely untruthful yarn. And even were he persuaded that the swineherd would side with him, his former master, what chance would these two have with little more than their bare hands and rugged bodies against the riotous nobles from all the adjoining islands who, accompanied by their servants, sit reveling in the halls of Odysseus' house in the

capital town of the island? But Athena, the goddess who is managing all the hidden strings of this puppet-play, now puts Telemachos ashore to evade the deadly ambush of the suitors who expected to kill him on the sea; and she sends him up to the same hut of the swineherd and lets him recognise his father and talk to him while the swineherd is off on an errand. Now there are three of them; but still what can they do? They can move forward, trusting in themselves and their own righteous anger. So, one by one, they go to town to the palace where the suitors are feasting. First goes Telemachos, who tells his mother Penelope where he has been, but will not let her into his great secret that Odysseus is now back in Ithaca. Then the swineherd follows, bringing with him the stranger who took refuge with him. He leads him to town in the guise of a beggar, a wretched man and old, leaning on a staff and clothed in rags. So helpless still are the three; but they are closing in now on their enemies.

The old beggar is kicked and beaten and made to battle with his fists against a rival beggar for the amusement and laughter of the revelers whom he hates. But he holds his peace and bides his time; since what yet can he do against them? When night comes on and the suitors depart elsewhere to their beds, the beggar Odysseus is left behind with Telemachus to brood and plot and lay his plans. Accordingly they strip the great hall of all the weapons and armor that hang upon its walls; and thus their cause grows a little stronger in that they are leaving the suitors nothing with which to defend themselves on the morrow, which is said to be a feast-day of rejoicing, but which one feels will be a day of grim disaster. But when his wife Penelope enters the hall, Odysseus will still not tell her who he is.

With morning, the suitors are back in their feasting-places, more arrogant and insolent than ever. And now happens an incident of curious invention which, amid the growing tension, is a thing of terrific effect. For while the suitors are jibing and laughing, their mouths suddenly pull crooked and their eyes fill

with water to set them weeping against their will, while the meats that they are eating start to bleed. And a soothsayer who has come up with Telemachos on his ship and has been invited to the banquet, beholds with his inspired eyes even more horrible things; for he cries out,

"All your heads and your bodies are wrapped in darkness; your cheeks are wet with tears; the walls and the rafters are spattered with blood; and all the porch and the courtyard are full of ghosts hurrying Hellward. The sun is destroyed in heaven; an evil mist has run over the day!"

And suddenly everything is normal again, and the suitors laugh merrily at the silly prophet, who stands up, saying "I know when misfortune is on men; and I am going forth from this house." The suitors feast carelessly on; but we who read-on or listen-on, know that we are watching where a catastrophe will now happen, that we are powerless to prevent.

You know the ending, and how suddenly it comes. Penelope has brought out the great bow which Odysseus left behind when he went to Troy; and she has promised to become the wife of any man who can string it. One after the other, the suitors make trial only to fail, till, more in derision than in fair contest, the despised ragged beggar is allowed to have his miserable turn. Then he strings the huge bow as easily as a minstrel might string his harp; and he twangs the stretched cord till it sings like the chirp of a swallow. He tests his skill with the bow by shooting an arrow through the rings of a line of axes set up in the ground. And then, suddenly, he strips off his beggars rags and, with the bow still taut, leaps to the threshold to bar the doorway, saying,

"So now the testing is over; and now for a target such as no man ever before has hit; and may Apollo grant that I strike it!" And with that, he speeds the first arrow into the heart of the first of the suitors.

I do not think that any story has ever been told better than that in any of the world's literature.

WATSON KIRKCONNELL

The Tapestry of Hungarian Literature

MUCH of the interest of any national literature lies in its diversity of pattern. The uniform checkerboard mosaic of bathroom linoleum soon palls on the esthetic taste, while the variety of colour and wealth of significance in a Gobelin tapestry exert a perennial fascination. The very way in which literary fashions ebb and flow from century to century is indicative of the writer's deeply felt need for such innovations as may give play to his originality and adequate expression to the shifting intellectual moods of his age.

Like all other European literatures, that of Hungary is richly diversified, incorporating the main movements of Continental art and thought yet revealing certain organic qualities of its own. The respect in which it shares in international characteristics is, as we shall see presently, more fundamental than that in which it is distinct from all others. The reasons for this are capable of analysis.

The foundations of the Hungarian nation were laid ten and a half centuries ago, when a migratory army of one hundred thousand Magyars, coming from the East, crossed the passes of the Carpathians into the broad Alföld plain, watered by the Danube and the Tisza. Philologists express some doubt as to whether these nation-builders possessed any uniform distinctiveness of race; and there is a real probability that they had accumulated wives, slaves and allies in centuries of migration from beyond the Urals. On the other hand, there is no doubt that over a millenium of human intermixture in this part of Europe has produced today a homogeneity of type that confounds most apostles of nationality. To the ethnologist, race is purely a matter

of such physical characteristics as skull shape, height, blood-group and colour of eyes and hair. Summing up the latest researches in this field, Dr. G. M. Morant of the University of London arrives at some interesting conclusions in his book, *The Races of Central Europe: A Footnote to History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1939). He finds that the average cephalic index is identical for Trianon Hungary, Slovakia, Bavaria, Eastern Poland and most of Transylvania; that the average stature is the same in Trianon Hungary, Slovakia, Austria and Bavaria; that there is scarcely any difference in pigmentation between Trianon Hungary and Slovakia, but that the Slovaks differ from the Czechs; and that in the matter of blood-groups, the Magyars, Slovaks and Poles show the same A:B index, while the Czechs, Austrians and Saxons belong to another group. In other words, in terms of race, the masses of the people in Hungary, Slovakia and Poland are relatively homogeneous, while the Czechs belong with the Eastern Germans. Jews and Gypsies were omitted from the foregoing calculations.

This general picture has historical warranty. There is no assurance that the Magyars under Árpád exterminated the previous population of the region; and from the time of King Stephen on, settlers of all sorts were invited in to help develop the resources of the land still further. After the withdrawal of the tide of Turkish conquest in the 17th century, moreover, there was a new influx of settlement from the surrounding countries. It would be a miracle if miscegenation had not made for a uniform type from the Bacska north over the Carpathians to Masovia and Polesia. The wonder is that the Magyar tradition of language and ultimate national consciousness should have been strong enough to assimilate so large a mass. In mediaeval England, a comparable though much smaller Norman conquest imposed the French language on court and state for only three centuries. At the end of that time, Geoffrey Chaucer, French in name and ultimate origin, was writing great poetry in English.

It is symbolic of Magyar cultural potency that Sándor Petöfi, the greatest and most truly national of Magyar poets, had a Serbian father (originally "Petrović") and a Slovak mother.

All this is not to say that no pure Asiatic types survive in Hungary. Cumanian and Tartar invasions helped to reinforce the original settlement, and I have seen marked Mongoloid types in Kiskúnság and other Alföld towns. In terms of the great masses of the Hungarian population, however, little Asiaticity remains as a basis for abuse from their neighbours or for self-congratulation on their own part. The average Magyar is no more Asiatic than the average Pole or the average Austrian. Such is the verdict of the physical anthropologist.

Culturally, however, Hungary is distinguished from all its neighbours by the use of a non-Indo-European language. Magyar is an agglutinative language, of Asiatic provenance, related on the north to Estonian, Finnish, Lappish, Ostiak and Vogul, and more remotely on the south to Turkish. Its texture is fundamentally different from that of the Slavic and German tongues round about it. It has inner rules of vowel harmony that add to the delicacy and grace of its utterance. Potentially it is one of man's noblest instruments of poetic expression, adapted with equal effectiveness to Latin and Greek metres and to those of Modern Europe.

Perhaps the most significant single step in Hungarian history was the decision of the pagan king, Stephen, at the beginning of the 10th century, to embrace Christianity and to receive his crown at the hands of the Pope. Thereafter Hungary belonged to the West. What earlier traditions of Ugric literature there may have been, we do not know. It is usually assumed that there were such. If so, Magyar literature thereafter is a palimpsest from which pious hands diligently rubbed away all pagan records, in order to set down the expression of a Christian culture.

From that time forward, the literature of Hungary followed the major fashions in European literature. Its mediaeval writers

gave themselves up to homilies, chronicles and lives of the saints, usually in Latin. With the Renaissance, and especially with the reign of King Mátyás (1443-1490), we find a profound interest in classical literature. One of the chief scholars of his court was Janus Pannonius, a devoted Platonist who translated Plotinus into Latin and wrote a lengthy Latin epic on his Venetian friend Marcello. The contact with Italy in these times was particularly close.

In the 16th century came the Reformation, shortly to be followed by the Counter-Reformation. Both religious movements, in their evangelical programs, translated the Scriptures from Latin into the vernacular and in general brought literary efforts down to the growing grass roots of popular speech. It was an age of fierce conflict, both religious and political. Out of the continuing struggle against Turk and Hapsburg was formed an intense national consciousness, expressed, for example, in the lyric poetry of Bálint Balassa and in the epic, the Zrinyiász, of Miklós Zrinyi (1618-1664). After the expulsion of the Turks in 1686, Hungary came under the foreign exploitation of the Austrians, and literature languished for nearly a century. Latin became the language of scholars and politicians, and little significant work was written in the vernacular.

The next important phase of Hungarian literature was a new classical age, partly influenced, with a time-lag, by the rationalism of Voltaire and the French Augustans and partly evoked directly by the study of classical Latin literature. Now came the discovery that Magyar was as brilliantly suited to ancient classical metres as Latin and Greek had been; and there was built up in Magyar a corpus of poetry in these metres unequaled in any other modern European language. Prominent among these practitioners in classical measures were Benedek Virág (1754-1830), Mihály Csokonai Vitéz (1773-1805) and Dániel Berzsenyi (1776-1836); and the achievement became a prominent part of the work of a subsequent Romantic generation,

including Károly Kisfaludy (1788-1830), Ferenc Kazinczy (1759-1831), and Mihály Vörösmarty (1800-1855).

A good example of the classical school at its height is Berzsenyi's lament, in stately Alcaics, on what he felt to be the decadence of his people under Austrian overlordship:

TO THE HUNGARIANS*

Once mighty Magyars, facing decadency,
See how the blood of Árpád degenerates!
See you not heaven, stern, revengeful,
Scourging your country with fierce misfortune?

Through bloody battles, wars of eight centuries,
Stood Buda's bastions, marr'd but immovable,
Though countless times in senseless fury
Fierce on your folk and yourselves you trampled.

Believe me, evil, modern debauchery,
Will waste the fort; foul, viperous prodigies
Gnaw even now those walls that often
Gazed in defiance at ruthless sieges. . . .

Slow poison now, slow death is decaying you;
Yea, look, the oak, once proudly recalcitrant
While standing firm through northern tempests,
Wastes at the root now with inward maggots. . . .

Alas! This fate whelms all things terrestrial!
We groan beneath stern hardship's vicissitudes;
Our fleeting fortune wantons ever, —
Playfully lifts us, then smites us earthward.

Time's iron hand uproots down the centuries
All things that are; tall towers of Ilion,
Proud Carthage, too, and Rome's white temples
Crumble with Babylon back to ashes.

The same theme is expressed in Sapphics by Dávid Baróti Szabó (1739-1819):

*All translations in this address are by Watson Kirkconnell

TO A FALLEN WALNUT-TREE

You, whose head once gazed at the lofty heaven,
Standing Kinglike, royal among your comrades:
Do I see you, beautiful walnut-monarch,
Prone on the earth now? . . .

Kind you were, rejoicing at no one's losses!
Cool your shade, that gave its relief to many!
Gracious tree, that pleased with your fruit men's fancy –
Tell us who hurt you!

Need I ask, when here in my eyes are staring
Those who kill'd you. 'Twas no external tempest!
Deep within, deep hid in your heart 'twas traitors
Secretly slew you.

See, there gnaw'd, gnaw'd right to your root's tough marrow,
Evil maggots; these to their cave invited
Swarming ant-tribes; seething, they crawl beneath you,
Even this moment.

Cursed guests! Ill offspring of vicious vipers!
Hapless tree! May Heaven, serene and strong-arm'd,
Hold erect our nation in virgin flower,
Guard it forever!

Or Ferenc Kazinczy pours out into quantitative hexameters his enthusiasm for his Magyar mother tongue:

Grace of old Greece the divine, and the greatness of
Rome the majestic,
Strength of the German and charm of the French and
the passion of Spaniard,
Softness of Polish—all hail! My language has
envied your beauties.
Yet do you envy it nothing? O, ocean-deep speech
of old Homer,
Tongue of the Mantuan, too, as you turn from the past
to our Europe,
Where but in Magyar indeed is your holy lute
faithfully cherished?

Full of rich resonant thunder, it rolls out its
music sublimely;
Swift as a man to its mark, it can leap with the
vigour of lightning;
Heart-searing sorrows will find it is full of the
sighs of affliction;
Warm as Italian or Polish, it whispers the fervours
of passion.
Hail, O ye tongues of the past, for our tongue as
a peer stands among you!

Or one may note yet again how Károly Kisfaludy opens, in elegiac couplets, his dirge on the national defeat of Mohács in 1526:

Sighing I greet thee and mourn thee, thou meadow
of burial, Mohács –
Grave of our national life, redden'd with blood
of the brave!
Over thee hover'd destruction, it hover'd on raven-dark
pinions,
Wreaking its ravaging strength, wrathfully, madly
on thee,
Branding with thunderous lightning the marks of
infatuate triumph,
Fierce on the flesh of the slain, hot on our
warrior dead. . . .

I have quoted at some length from these poets, but with a definite purpose. The extent and merit of these classical metres in Hungarian literature is unapproached in any other modern language and constitutes a unique claim to interest. The greatest Magyar literature may have taken other forms, but this exhibition of pristine classicism is imposing in its sheer bulk and merit.

The Romantic Movement in Hungary has close resemblances to that in France, Germany and England; but its dominant note is that of nationalism, bursting out uncontrollably in the Revolutionary War of 1848-49 and then sobbing into silence as Russian bayonets and Austrian firing squads blotted out the brief epi-

sode of liberty. The Classical metres, as already noted, were carried over even into the work of the great Romantics, but the tone was intensely emotional and imaginative. Only that their field was the epic rather than the drama, one might describe Mihály Vörösmarty as the Aeschylus and János Arany as the Euripides of the new age. Vörösmarty had a lofty style of flashing magnificence, as a vehicle for themes of Gothic terror. His most famous epic, *The Two Castles*, is the story of a mediaeval feud between two noble houses. Tihamér, the son of one nobleman, returns home to find all the rest of the family murdered. He therefore grimly vows to destroy the whole family of his hereditary enemy. One by one, he challenges them and kills them, until only the grey-haired old father and his young daughter Enikö are left. He fights and kills the father. Then, dressing himself in the old man's armour, he presents himself to the daughter, whose horror, as he raises his helmet, is too much for her reason. Tihamér himself cannot endure the terror of it all and rushes off, never to be heard from again.

János Arany, unlike Vörösmarty, had a style of pellucid charm rather than one of lofty brilliance. He also was deeply interested in the psychological springs of human conduct and had a deep sense of the drama of human life. His finest epic, *Toldi*, has its roots in the folklore of the Hungarian countryside and tells with winsomeness the story of a strong and impulsive younger brother who, as a sort of male Cinderella, flashes into sudden fame by his deeds of knightly strength and receives the rewards of merit, while his unjust elder brother is duly humbled. Even finer in their way are his ballads, in which character and motive are grippingly portrayed. He has been called "the Shakespeare of the ballad"; and within the smaller compass of this literary form he gave a moving presentation of life in a Hungarian setting.

The third member of Hungary's Romantic trinity was Sándor Petöfi (1822-49), the supreme lyric poet of an age of revolution. More than any other writer, he has caught the rich native flavour

of national life, especially that among the simple peasantry of the Alföld, the great Central Plain of Hungary. But to his contemporaries he was still more a Tyrtaeus who rode the crest of a wave of revolution and died in action at Segesvár, fighting in vain for the freedom of his country. For the great, brief hour of independence, he wrote the Hungarian "Marseillaise"—the "Talpra Magyar," distributed still moist from a commandeered printing press to cheering crowds in the streets of Budapest:

Magyars, rise, your country calls you!
Meet this hour, whate'er befalls you!
Shall we freemen be, or slaves?
Choose the lot your spirit craves! —
    By Hungary's holy God
    Do we swear,
    Do we swear that servile chains
    We'll no more bear! . . .

Vile is he who will not give
Life to let his country live,
Counting his poor breath a prize
Dearer than his native skies!
    By Hungary's holy God
    Do we swear,
    Do we swear that servile chains
    We'll no more bear!

Swords are nobler than the fetter —
Suit the freeborn arm far better.
Yet we've worn harsh chains and cords.
Give us now our faithful swords!
    By Hungary's holy God
    Do we swear,
    Do we swear that servile chains
    We'll no more bear!

Beauty to the Magyar name
Shall return, and ancient fame
That these evil epochs sully
We shall cleanse in battle fully.

By Hungary's holy God
Do we swear,
Do we swear that servile chains
We'll no more bear!

Where our grassy graves shall sleep
Children's children still shall keep
All our names in sacred trust,
Kneeling bless our silent dust.
By Hungary's holy God
Do we swear,
Do we swear that servile chains
We'll no more bear!

It was when all Romantic hopes of national freedom had passed into eclipse that Hungary produced its one imaginative work of universal significance, *The Tragedy of Man* (1861) by Imre Madách. While it shows some influences from Goethe, Milton and Byron, it is nevertheless profoundly original and brings within its scope nothing less than the whole destiny of mankind, from the expulsion out of Eden down to a far-off day when life becomes extinct on a frozen and uninhabitable earth. In the opening scenes of this colossal drama, Adam and Eve taste the forbidden fruit in the Earthly Paradise and are driven out. They have apparently unconquerable hopes for the future, and Lucifer, who seeks to destroy the human race at its very source, evokes for them a series of disillusionizing dreams of the future, in each of which they play an active part.

In the first vision, Eve is a slave in Egypt and Adam an imaginative Pharaoh, who longs to free mankind from the despotism of his own system. His wish is promptly granted. He finds himself Miltiades in democratic Athens, only to learn that the democratic mob cannot appreciate conspicuous virtue and clamours for his death. Mocking at his frustrated idealism, he craves a life of sensual indulgence and finds it in the bacchanalian orgies of Imperial Rome. On the scene of that dissolute revelry there breaks the terror of the Plague; and Saint Peter comes preaching

the temperate purity of the Christian faith. In the next vision, Adam, as the Crusader, Tancred, finds that religious celibacy has come to regard pure love as a crime and has lost itself in a swamp of dogma and intolerance. He longs for peace in intellectual enlightenment and next appears as the astronomer, Kepler; but science is not enough and he desires action in a heroic age of reform. That age dawns as the French Revolution, with Adam as Danton, but the Revolution goes berserk and Adam, now craving a state based on order as well as liberty, perishes by the guillotine. In the next dream, he finds himself in the ordered freedom of England, but London proves a vast incubus of mercantile mediocrity. In the ninth vision, Adam is taken forward into a Socialist utopia of the future, but finds that in this "phalanstery" the individual has neither power nor initiative, and is merely a nameless, numbered cog in a vast machine. Art and poetry have been suppressed, because they have no socialist utility. The "last scene of all, that ends this strange eventful history," is among a few degenerate Esquimaux, the last of human survivors, where a dying sun casts its feeble light on a frozen world. Adam's misery is enhanced by the sight of Eve as the wretched mate of an Esquimaux, who offers his wife's love to the visiting stranger in accordance with the practice of this ultimate age. Adam awakens from the nightmare sequence, but when he is about to frustrate this future of the race by his own suicide, Eve restrains him by telling him she is going to become a mother. Adam kneels in surrender before God and is given by him a message of encouragement, even amid the gibes of Lucifer. Those who have seen this tremendous drama performed under floodlights in a huge public square at night, as I did at Szeged in 1938, will realize the scope and power of a truly great work. Let me quote from its closing lines:

THE LORD:

> Seek, then, no further for the mystery
> Conceal'd by kindly Wisdom from thy sight.

If thou couldst see how transient is thy life,
How vast the abysses of eternity,
It would appear as virtue not to be.
If thou couldst see thy spirit lost in dust,
What prick of high ideal could spur thee on
To vault the crumbling pleasures of the day?
But now, thy future glimmers through a mist;
And if the earth's brief burdens bear thee down,
The sense of endless glory draws thee on.
Proud in the faith of some high destiny,
Thou shalt disdain the vanity of life,
With virtue and nobility to cheer thee still.

LUCIFER *(laughing):*

In faith, thou hast a glorious path to tread
With virtue and nobility as guides.
If these two words can thus gain flesh and blood,
Then surely superstition, prejudice,
And dull stupidity will guard thee too.
How excellent a creature is this man —
Kneaded from mud and sunbeams to become
A dwarf in knowledge, infinitely blind!

ADAM:

Mock not, O Lucifer, mock not at all:
I have beheld thy knowledge, purely wrought
And cold as Arctic ice-floes to the heart.
But, O my Lord, who is it may endure
To walk unshaken on the way of life?
Thou hast withdrawn Thine all-directing hand
That I may taste of knowledge and its fruit.

THE LORD:

Strong be thine arm, exalted be thy heart:
The scope that claims thy work is infinite.
And if thou hearkenest unceasingly,
One call shall summon thee. That hear, obey,
And follow only. In life's busy din
This voice of heaven shall bring gentle peace,
Shall make thy wanton wife a purer mate,
And draw thy fancies farther from the dirt.

Give ear to its sweet words, and through thy veins
Shall pulse the tide of poesy and song.
With these two ministers on either hand,
Thou shalt front good and evil circumstance
With equal smiling mastery of soul.
But thou, O Lucifer, hast thy due round
Within this cosmic scheme; pursue it yet.
Thy icy knowledge, maniac negatives,
Shall be fermenting yeast in human minds,
Seducing them from duty for a while.
Yet thou shalt suffer pangs without an end,
Beholding him whom thou hast sought to slay
A seed of new and nobler things to be.

The last four decades of the 19th century were a relatively static and assimilative period in Hungarian literature. The smothering of national freedom in 1849 and its sudden resuscitation, almost without a struggle, by the Compromise of 1867, blunted the force of nationalism in literature. The simple tenderness of Petöfi's poetry of the countryside, moreover, all too often became slovenly sentimentalism in his successors and tended to discredit the type. The main trend of the period was a Parnassianism, parallel to that of the time in French, seeking marmoreal finality of style rather than spontaneity of poetic effusion. The period also contributed to the maturing of the nation's cultural consciousness by copious translations from foreign literatures. By the end of the century, the major peaks of European literature had been scaled and explored, from Aeschylus to Goethe and beyond.

In the 20th century, Magyar literature moved forward again, but in two army-columns rather than one, by the high road of the traditionalists and the low road of the radicals. The former group has achieved great things but without conspicuous novelty. The leader of the radicals was Endre Ady (1877-1919), the chief lyric poet of modern Hungary. He published over one thousand poems in twenty years, almost invariably brief lyrics

cunningly stained with the tincture of a mood or stamped with the compelling impress of a thought. He was an indefatigable student of the Hungarian language, seeking ever to mint new phrases as yet unspoiled by generations of versifiers or to draw bright and unworn diction from the coffers of the mediaeval past. Even greater is his power over symbols and analogies, assisting the mind to explore and chart otherwise non-measurable worlds of spiritual quality.

Two examples will perhaps suffice, one from modern life and one from the depths of the primitive within us. In "The Black Piano," the discord of modern existence is symbolized by a passive, helpless instrument, cruelly abused by a callous, sightless Performer:

> Mad instrument: it mumbles, weeps, and neighs.
> He who lacks wine finds anguish if he stays:
> This is the black piano.
> The blind Performer tears and tousles it,
> Playing life's ditty in a frantic fit.
> This is the black piano.
>
> The roaring in my head, my eyes' hot tears,
> The feasting of wild impulse down the years —
> All this is the piano.
> My drunken, foolish heart in eager heat
> Pours out its blood to hear the music's beat.
> This is the black piano.

In "In Front of the Prince of Silence," on the other hand, he conjures up from the primitive memories within his own civilized soul the animistic terror of savage man for the terrible Thing that walks behind him in the moonlight of the forest; and this fear from the subconscious gulfs of the racial past becomes a symbol of his own destiny, of that feverish preoccupation with life's eternal mystery that will slay him miserably if he should cease from his creative toil in poetry:

Under the moon, I walk the forest ways.
My teeth are chattering and I whistle shrill.
Behind my back, ten fathoms tall, there stalks
The Prince of Silence;
And woe is me, if e'er I turn my head!

Ah, woe is me, if I were to be mute,
Or if I paused to gaze up at the Moon.
Only one moan, only one crunch there'd be:
The Prince of Silence
Would take one step and trample me to death.

But the threads in the Magyar tapestry that are most unusual are those that present a national mysticism of race, pagan and pre-Christian in character.

The beginnings of this cultural design are found in *Zalán's Flight* (1825), an epic poem in the Vergilian manner by Mihály Vörösmarty. The poem deals with a struggle between the invading Magyars under Árpád in 896 A.D. and earlier Bulgarian settlers under their prince Zalán, and in theme and treatment somewhat resembles the second half of the *Aeneid.* Faced with the need for mythological "apparatus," Vörösmarty proceeds to invent one and to introduce such gods as the pagan Árpád might have believed in, notably Hadur, the lord of battles, and Armány (Ahriman), the deity of evil.

This design is reinforced by János Arany's *Death of Buda* (1864), his first and only completed installment of a trilogy of epics on the 5th century invasion of Europe by the Huns, reputed kinsmen of the later Magyars. In many respects this is a learned poem in the full stream of the European tradition. It owes manifest debts to Vergil, to the *Nibelungenlied,* and to Tennyson. At the same time it presents the Magyars with a legendary past, hinted at in old mediaeval chronicles but never set forth before in such living reality.

When the epic begins, the Huns have settled on the Alföld. Their ruler, King Buda, finding himself growing old for full

responsibility, invites his warlike younger brother Attila to assume a junior kingship and share the load with him. Attila shows himself vigorous and competent; and his star waxes while Buda's wanes. Suspicion is sown between the brothers by Theodoric the Goth, a sort of grey-haired Iago who takes delight in his crafty course. Tragedy is brought on still more surely by Buda's barren wife, Gyöngyvér, whose jealousy towards Attila's wife Ildikó (Hilda, Kriemhild) leads her to prod her weak, good-natured husband into fatal acts of hostility. Attila is presented as a great and noble character in whom one flaw, as in the typical Shakespearean tragic hero, proves his undoing. In his case the tragic flaw is uncontrollable anger, set on fire when Buda steals from him a holy sword of destiny, a sort of Hunnish Excalibur, committed to his keeping by Hadur, the Lord of Hosts. In the sequel, the brothers join in single combat before the eyes of their armies. The magic sword proves mere metal in the hands of its unlawful possessor; and as Buda turns to flee, the enraged Attila runs him through. Hadur had promised him that he should be "Lord of all earth, if master of his heart," but the impulsive crime of fratricide has ruined this high destiny.

The picture that Arany paints of Hadur, the supreme God of the pagan Huns and Magyars, differs so clearly from that of Christian poetry, that a full-length quotation, from the close of Canto VIII, seems warranted here. Buda and Attila have composed a violent quarrel between their wives, and the whole Hunnish host has retired to its tents for the night:

> The lights of earth had ceased at last to shine;
> All eyes were closed; the camp-fires flickered out;
> But the high firmament, that tent divine,
> Gleam'd over all in vigilance devout.
>
> So the old God, the eye and sun of earth,
> The Lord of Hosts, Father of fire and air,
> Trainer of mankind from their fleeting birth,
> Sat in His tent upon His gilt arm-chair.

Slowly the veils of heaven are drawn aside;
He hears men pant on earth in sore distress;
With piercing glance He gazes far and wide,
Tending His charge with quiet watchfulness.

His shield against His chair leans idly yet;
He rests a peaceful elbow on its crown;
Upon one finger-tip His brow is set;
The snow of His great beard drifts thickly down.

His right hand, strong with wider-swelling veins,
Rests on His sabre's ruby-studded hilt;
His quiver at His chair-foot still remains,
Its burning arrows in red glory spilt.

His eyes, as the round earth they slowly trace,
Upon King Attila's dream repose at last;
Then the fresh brightness of His grave old face
In Northern Lights across the sky is cast.

"Brave Attila, my servant, slumbers deep.
Now must I change," said He, "this idle sea
Of drossy vapours that his visions keep,
And plunge him in a dream of destiny.

The time has come; for with victorious will
He vanquishes himself and wars in zeal.
Today he put to rout the Fiend of Ill
And saved dull Buda's life with valor leal.

The time has come for his imperial state,
Even as it was written from the start
In secret runes, high on the Tree of Fate:
'Lord of all earth, if master of his heart.'

Well, let that be fulfill'd which must be! Yea,
For good or evil, let the future come!
To great deeds gird I Attila today,
Grant him my sword as a palladium."

So spake He, and majestically rose
And went into His gleaming armory;
A clanging sword engraved with runes He chose,
Letters to which no mortal held the key.

Two steeds of storm-wind, grazing upon fire,
His servants harness to His shining car;
He grasps the glittering reins; the heavens entire
Ring with deep thunder as He drives afar.

Beside King Attila's tent He stops His team;
Stoops softly through the earthly monarch's door;
Girds him with that great sabre in his dreams;
And on His chariot rides forth once more.

The soft air cracks beneath His horses' hooves;
Like water skimm'd, it sinks not as they churn,
Crying with impact as each great wheel moves,
So fast and with such crushing force they turn.

On far fields sleeping, many a mortal quakes,
Pulling the covers up, too pale for boasts,
And sleeps yet deeper as the dawn awakes—
No human eye has seen the Lord of Hosts.

What began as an epic device tended to produce a poetic school and ultimately a political myth. Vörösmarty's chief disciple, Gergely Czuczor (1800-1866), produced another epic of the pagan period, *Botond* by name, the hero of which was a colossal chieftain who hurled his mace through the bronze gates of Constantinople. Andor Kozma followed with two more pagan epics, *Turán* (1922) and *Conquest* (1926) dealing with saga-themes from the remote Magyar past, while Kálmán Harsányi wrote a verse drama of Attila's life, entitled *Ellák*. The "Turanian" movement that was taking shape also showed some awareness of the philological discovery that the closest affinities of the Magyar language were with Finnish, Estonian and Vogul, and that racial filiation with the Turk or the Hun was probably very remote. Hence Árpád Imre Zempléni, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Turanian school, supplemented his *Songs of Turán* (1910) with *Vasfö and Imre: A Vogul Legend* (1918), while Aladár Ban, editor of the periodical *Turán*, translated copiously from Finnish and Estonian. It is not enough, however, to object that racially speaking the whole Turanian

movement is about as relevant to the bulk of the Magyars as a school of Arthurian poets would be in New York. The very conception was potent in evoking a national consciousness, felt to be different from that of neighbours with a non-Turanian language. Perhaps the most poignant expression of this mood is to be found in Endre Ady's poem "The Lost Horseman," where he portrays his nation symbolically as lost for a thousand years in the alien civilization of Europe:

> One hears the sound of the blind galloping
> Of a lost horseman from the long ago,
> And echoing hearts of vanished forests ring,
> And ancient marshes waken, full of woe.
>
> Where here and there the coppices are choked
> With ancient thicket, and the brake is rife,
> From winters' tales of long ago invoked,
> Unnumber'd spectres rouse to sudden life.
>
> Here is the thicket, here the coppice lies,
> Here is the dull, old tune the wraiths pursue,
> Here in the deaf, white mists there swells and dies
> Sad martial music that our grandsires knew.
>
> Weird to our eyes grows Autumn, fewer yet
> Are men in number; and across the plain,
> Whose dreary leagues the dreary hill beset,
> Encloak'd in fog, November comes again.
>
> Half-naked is this prairie, where persist
> Only the rotting marsh, the leafless trees;
> Here, in the murk of the November mist,
> There lurk the ghosts of by-gone centuries.
>
> What blood outpour'd, how many mysteries,
> What ancestry and impulse there must lie!
> What forests and what marshes before these!
> What gallant madmen in the years gone by!
>
> A straying horseman from the long ago
> Takes a strange road o'ergrown with brush and blight,
> But there's no spark, no ray of lamp-a-glow,
> Nor trace of any village in the night.

The villages are lapt in silent sleep;
Coldly they dream of other times and cares;
And from the foggy forest rush and leap
Wolves, bisons, and infuriated bears.

One hears the sound of the blind galloping
Of a lost horseman from the long ago,
And echoing hearts of vanish'd forests ring,
And ancient marshes waken, full of woe.

Moving as such an utterance may be, it is based on an illusion. Anthropologically and culturally, Hungary now belongs to the West. This ancient champion of Christendom no longer has any share in the Turanian swamps beyond the Urals. Least of all does Hungary belong with the Red tyranny of Mátyás Rákosi, which would blot out all faith and all civilization and would turn what few authors survived into polishers of literary apples for the Master Despot in the Kremlin.

CHARLES S. SINGLETON

Italian Literature: Three Masters, Three Epochs

ANY LITERATURE as extensive in time and as rich in variety as the literature of Italy can always be viewed as one long dream. Such a figure will serve at least to point to a principle of continuity which no one is likely to deny in any such literature; and, with the notion of dream, also to point to the notorious absence of any real principle of progress in the development of a literature. But, in holding to such a figure, we should still need a name for a certain undeniable principle of change involved, need a name, that is, for those moments when the one dream may be seen to take a new course, when the sleepers (for they are more than one) appear to grow restless and turn over; when the dream begins again in what, from a waking perspective, we can see is a new pattern or a different key. Such moments if they have significant duration I shall call epochs. They are no more predictable than the moments of change in a dream. We may never feel sure that we can assign to them their true causes. Nor are they many in any literature. In the course of Italian literature up to fairly modern times I venture to distinguish only three.

What, in such a figure and such a sweeping view, I shall mean by three masters, and who these are, will soon be clear if at this point I may linger no longer in abstraction and not all in the factual data of history but may rather attempt to set before you here this evening, in their respective order in time, examples of three master patterns which underlie the one dream of Italian literature. Or shall we abandon that figure and call them simply three dominant moods?

No other literature, I think, denies quite so overwhelmingly as

does Italian literature what is a dominant dream pattern of our own day: denies, I mean, the idea of progress. For there, at the very beginning of that literature, stands its greatest achievement, its first claim to be counted a world literature: there stands Dante's poem, towering over not only all that comes after it written in the Italian language, but (in the opinion of a number of qualified judges) over all that follows in whatever language. There like a solitary mountain, higher than any we have ever seen, stands a great poem. But there are no foothills leading up to it from the other side of time; and on this side, as we look back up the stream of time toward it, there are still no foothills.

Let us take up a position within the poem at that point when Dante and Vergil emerge from the darkness of Hell to behold the stars once more. That phrase will serve to remind you that there was a moment before in the poem when we had seen the stars. That was before we entered through the door of Hell, back at the beginning when the poet had come from the dark wood just before sunrise. Now, as we stand on the shores of Purgatory, a mountain island in the southern hemisphere of water, we are struck by the fact that the beginning of the poem had already given us a prefiguration of this present situation. Here too it is early dawn, the stars are still visible. Here, as there, a mountain rises up before us; and at the summit here, as there, we know there is the light that guides us home to God. But there is a difference, one of no small importance. Back there, at the beginning, the day was one of universal mourning: Good Friday. But not—now that the descent through Hell and the climb out of the darkness is past—it is the morning of Easter Sunday. Back there, moreover, there were three beasts blocking the way up the mountain. But here now, Hell and those beasts are put behind the wayfarer, and his way up the mountain, even though the trials of purgation lie ahead, is no longer blocked. And, as Vergil tells old Cato who is the guardian of this realm, there is a power that comes from Heaven vouchsafing the completion of this

upward climb. Back there, struggling on the dark slope alone, the poet had relied on his own powers, and these had proved insufficient to cope with the beasts. But now, at Cato's direction, Dante goes to gird himself with one of the rushes that grow on the lowest shores of this island, symbols of humility – an humility he himself has learned by descending to the bottom of Hell before trying to climb the mountain. He has learned now to wait on a power that comes from on high, to depend on grace.

This second realm is Cato's. Here souls straighten wills that have grown crooked in the world and regain here that liberty which was lost when the will was twisted thus away from God. The assignment of Cato, a pagan and a suicide, as guardian of this most Christian place of Purgatory makes for special problems in Dante studies into which I have no intention of venturing here. Enough for present purposes if we see in Cato the embodiment of *conscience*, at least in the role which we shall now watch him play in a little episode taking place on the shore of this island.

Through all of Inferno Vergil had known the way. But here on this island and this deserted shore all is new and strange even to him. And it is all new and strange, of course, to those souls who are now seen to arrive over the ocean waters. Vergil and Dante cannot at first make out what it is that is approaching. Then gradually, as it draws nearer, they see it is a little boat piloted by an angel, a boatload of souls coming to their purgation. They are singing in chorus a Psalm, the 113th in fact, which begins with the verse: "When Israel came out of Egypt." This, on the level of allegory, is of course most appropriate, for now these souls are truly leaving the Egypt of this world behind them. This is for them the last Exodus. They go now toward a heavenly Jerusalem and home.

We begin thus to see that the allegory of this poem is based on the fact that events in this realm beyond our present life reflect our journey here in this life. Perhaps a passage from

St. Augustine's treatise *On Christian Doctrine* will help us to see this even better. In reading it, we should remember that the poem has now given us a Vergil and a Dante and a group of souls who are in this place as in a strange new land, who are here as pilgrims—a fact which finds expression in Vergil's reply to the souls as they disembark on the shore and ask him at once the way up the mountain:

> E Virgilio rispose: "Voi credete
> forse che siamo esperti d'esto loco;
> ma noi siam peregrin come voi sete.

> Perhaps, Vergil replied, you think we
> are familiar with this place; but we
> are pilgrims even as you are.

Now, in the passage I shall read to you from Augustine, the Saint is speaking of the distinction that ought to be made between *using* things and *enjoying* things. And in illustration of this point he gives a little sketch of our mortal condition in this life:

For to enjoy a thing is to rest with satisfaction in it for its own sake. To use, on the other hand, is to employ whatever means are at one's disposal to obtain what one desires, . . . Suppose, then, we were wanderers in a strange country, and could not live happily away from our fatherland; and that we felt wretched in our wanderings, and wishing to put an end to our misery, determined to return home. We find, however, that we must make use of some mode of conveyance, either by land or water, in order to reach that fatherland where our enjoyment is to commence. But the beauty of the country through which we pass and the very pleasure of the motion charm our hearts, and turning these things which we ought to use into objects of enjoyment, we become engrossed in a factitious delight, our thoughts are diverted from that home whose delights would make us truly happy. Such is a picture of our condition in this life of mortality. We have wandered far from God; and if we wish to return to our Father's home, this world must be used not enjoyed. (De Doctrina Christiana, I, 4)

Now, to come back to the beginning of Purgatory and to an episode that seems almost the deliberate staging of the little picture that Augustine has put before us. When the newly arrived souls take notice of the fact that Dante has come here in the flesh, they crowd around him in amazement. Among them Dante recognizes an old friend, a certain Florentine musician named Casella; and, after some exchange of affectionate greetings and some account of how it is that each of them is here, Dante asks of this old friend of his a special favor. He begs him to sing for him as he used to do in days gone by. Whereupon, without a moment's hesitation, Casella obliges his friend by intoning one of Dante's own lyrics, an early poem the first verse of which thus becomes one verse of the *Divine Comedy:* "Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona": Love which speaks forth in my mind. But I must give you the whole of this little episode as the poem gives it, even though as always our translation inevitably loses much of the poetry of it:

And I said to him: "If some new law deprives you not of memory or of the custom of amorous song, then may it please you to console my soul somewhat which, coming here with my body, is so weary.

"Amor che ne la mente mi ragiona" he then began to sing so sweetly that the sweetness still resounds within me. My master and I and all those souls that were with him seemed so content as though nothing else whatever touched their minds. We were all intent and fixed upon his notes when, lo, the honest old man shouting: "What is this, tardy spirits? What negligence, what loitering is this? Hasten to the mountain to put off the slough that lets not God be manifest to you."

The metaphor which brings in the word "slough" here is a striking one. It draws on the image of a snake shedding its old skin (which is so called) and becoming a bright new creature. It is, in fact, the image of what is to take place up on the mountain of Purgatory. There these souls are to put off the old man and, within, the new man is to grow from day to day. But

I would not have you overlook the allegory. The old man who comes rushing up, old Cato, we have said, is conscience. And in the event that has been put before us here, we are to see mirrored something that can happen and should happen back here in this life where we too are as pilgrims, even as Augustine has reminded us. The poem is thus, so to speak, open to us. We see ourselves and our mortal condition reflected here. The word "slough" and the image suggested by it applies to us and to our journey *in this life.* An interesting restatement of the same idea is given by another image further along in the poem where we, we mortals, are addressed as follows:

> Do you (that is, *we*) not see that we are worms born to form the angelic butterfly that flies to justice without protections? Wherefore do your spirits soar aloft since you are as larva defective in formation, like a worm that has not reached its full development!

And so, at Cato's shout these pilgrims in a strange new land scatter like frightened birds and each hastens toward the mountain and toward his, toward man's, proper goal.

For man, as Dante and his age saw him, had a goal; had, in fact, only one proper and final goal which in this life's journey he should never forget. It was, as Augustine had said, "that fatherland where our enjoyment is to commence," "that home whose delights would make us truly happy." In turning to the beginning of the Purgatorio I have merely sampled, at a single point and in one little scene, a poem which from its first verse to its last is the expression of a single dominant mood: a mood that amounts essentially to a sense that man has a goal which lies beyond this life and above it, a sense of being involved in a vertical movement, be it up or down, be it toward salvation or perdition. But we shall see even better the pattern here when we shall have seen how it contrasts with another to which we now come.

Let us turn to a prose work written less than half a century

after Dante's *Comedy,* to Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron;* and taking up a position with that work, let us observe how the pattern of the dream about man and man's place in this world is changed. We open the book to its very first words and we read: *Umana cosa è . . . :* A human thing it is . . . So begins the *Decameron.* And in several of the manuscripts of the work that have come down to us that first word *Umana* is made beautifully ornate in its initial letter, which spreads in scrolls and boughs and green leaves all around the margins of the page, as indeed its meaning seems to do around the work it introduces: a human thing it is. When we come from the *Divine Comedy* to this work, those openings words cannot fail to take on special meaning. Not that the *human* is absent from Dante's poem. On the contrary, I think we have had a glimpse of how very present it is. But the action of Dante's poem, we may remember, originates not in a human sphere of things, but above the human. And, in that poem, as we have said, man is before us as wayfarer, ever reminded of a goal which transcends man and his human powers, a goal which lies above and beyond the human. In the first canto of *Paradiso,* as Dante begins his ascent up through the spheres to the vision of God, we meet the expression of this idea in a single verb: *trasumanar.* We shall not find an equivalent for it in English. But you see what it means: to go beyond the human, to rise above the human: something which we saw in the image of a worm born to form an angelic butterfly.

And now, on the threshold of the *Decameron* we meet the words which, like a tuning fork, give the key and pitch of a brave new dream: *Umana cosa.* We come to a mood that is new. For, beginning with those words, Boccaccio is deliberately setting out to create for his readers just that: a mood. You will all recall the Introduction to the work, the description of the terrible plague, which came upon the city of Florence in the year 1348 and the story of how three young men and seven young women escape from the plague-ridden city and become the story-tellers

of these one hundred tales. There is, in such an introduction, a purpose which scholars and critics of the work have not always been prepared to see. But at this point I ought to warn you that I am indulging in a speculation all my own. I hold that the so-called framework of the *Decameron*—by which I mean all of that narrative which surrounds and encloses the hundred tales—has a definite function, serves in the intention of its author a purpose which has become obscure to us since, because we no longer feel the need of what it was put there to give: namely, the defence of a new art. With the episode of Purgatory before us we may see this more clearly than we might have done without it. There we have seen how the stern voice of Cato (or of Conscience, if you like) could break in upon the contemplation of a work of art and disperse it. We have seen how, within the medieval frame, no thing—and that includes works of art—may for long have what we might call *terminal* value; how, on the road of this life there may be no loitering. For a while the group had lingered over Casella's song, completely absorbed, as if nothing else touched their minds. They were, in those moments, the perfect listeners; or, remembering that this was a poem, we might also say the perfect readers, asking nothing more than what Dante has asked of Casella, that in this song they should find rest for all their desires.

Now, suppose that an artist conceived this kind of absorbed attention to be the proper one for his art; and suppose too that he were still near enough to Dante's age that he were aware of the threat that might come to an art so conceived (as Cato had come), of the threat from a conscience ever aware of a final goal for man above; and suppose he wanted to build against that voice a defence for his art. Might he not do this by constructing around his work a mood, just such a mood as is needed for the kind of absorbed contemplation to which his art is dedicated? Might he not build, that is, a sort of bulwark and protecting dike around this art? That, I suggest, is what the framework of the

Decameron is designed to do: to establish and to maintain a mood that will keep stern Cato's voice from breaking in. Thus we can see in a new light Boccaccio's strategy. Out of the chaos and terrible destruction wrought by a plague, a group of young people is allowed to escape and to take refuge in pleasant abodes in the hills above the city. There, in their Olympic retreat, they are as in some earthly paradise; and, since they are well born and attended by many servants, they have nothing in particular to do. How shall they pass the time? That becomes for them the question. They recognize that without some order their pleasant life in such idyllic circumstance cannot endure. And so they begin to establish some order by electing a queen for the first day. And as they gather around her on the hot summer's afternoon, their new queen, just before the story-telling is to begin, speaks words which are the culminating expression of that mood which this whole introduction has been working to establish:

Come voi vedete, il sole è alto ed il caldo è grande, né altro s'ode che le cicale su per gli ulivi, per che l'andare al presente in alcun luogo sarebbe sanza dubbio sciocchezza.

As you see (says Pampinea, the newly elected queen) the sun is high and the heat is great, nor is aught to be heard save the cicadas up in the olive trees; for which reason it would be foolish to be going anywhere just now.

And so, why not tell stories? And so, for the reader, why not read these stories?

Project these words and the mood they give against the episode in Purgatory. And when you do this reflect that this is the mood which is sustained throughout the work as a frame around these one hundred tales. And then think that the *Decameron* was written only a single generation after the *Divine Comedy*. But so it is. Our dream in which we see ourselves acting out our role in the world suddenly takes a new turn, finds unpredictably a new key.

It is with Boccaccio a dream in the key of "having nowhere to go." Day after day this group can sit and tell their tales in serene enjoyment and idleness and no voice like Cato's can interrupt; no voice, nothing indeed is heard save the cicadas up in the olive trees.

And just as Dante's triple rhyme reproduces ever anew in itself the reminder of a goal—a triune God—, the reminder that there is somewhere to go and that we are involved in a journey; so does Boccaccio's meandering periodic sentence, which is his own expressive unit, give the mood of "nowhere to go." Think of this when you next read one of those sentences of his and try it out. Project it in your mind's eye against the sketch that St. Augustine has given us and take by that its measure. The Saint has told us, you recall, that the beauty of the country through which we pass and the very pleasure of the motion may charm our hearts and turning these things which we ought to use into objects of enjoyment we become unwilling to hasten the end of our journey. What else is one of Boccaccio's periodic sentences but the quintessential expression of unwillingness to hasten the end of our journey, of wanderings down byways, off the main path, now to this side and now to that, unhurried by any sense of urgent final goal?

Or is not this whole mood of "nowhere to go" caught perhaps best by the image of a closed garden: just such a garden as these storytellers sit in, where pleasant labyrinthine paths bordered by trim hedges lead nowhere in particular? Boccaccio's space is essentially a closed space, closed both around and above; the mystery beyond the wall is shut out for the moment at least, and forgotten. There is nowhere in particular to go, for this world is a human thing and man is the whole measure of it.

* * *

And now, with this second moment of the one dream in mind, we turn to a third. From the first to the second we took, in time, a very short step—a single generation; and that was the surprise

of it. But now we take a very long one, over many generations (we shall have something more to say about the length of the step) and come to a lyric written by the poet Giacomo Leopardi in the year 1819, when he was twenty-two years of age. I want to read the poem to you in the Italian and in order that some of you may be helped to follow it better in the original, let us see a little of what it tells us, at least at the outset. The opening verses, in a way so typical with Leopardi, give us a particular situation, set a stage for us, as it were, on which a lyric voice can rise and act a role by speaking one. In this particular poem which bears the title "L'Infinito" (The Infinite) this stage-set is so: the poet has climbed to the top of a hill, a lonely hill, a favorite haunt of his, a spot enclosed by a hedge which shuts out most of the far horizon that might be seen were it not there. (Shall I remind you of the walled garden we have just left behind?) The poet had always liked this hill and liked this hedge. But beyond this I should certainly spoil the poem for you were I to try to follow out in paraphrase the movement of the lyric voice that rising now out of this closed space begins to go somewhere, enters upon a journey. What kind of journey you shall see. I give you the poem and follow with a kind of translation of it in prose:

Sempre caro mi fu quest'ermo colle
e questa siepe che da tanta parte
dell'ultimo orizzonte il guardo esclude.
Ma sedendo e mirando, interminati
spazi di lá da quella e sovrumani
silenzi e profondissima quiete
io nel pensier mi fingo; ove per poco
il cor non si spaura. E come il vento
odo stormir tra queste piante, io quello
infinito silenzio a questa voce
vo comparando: e mi sovvien l'eterno
e le morte stagioni, e la presente
e viva e il suon di lei. Così tra questa
immensità s'annega il pensier mio:
e il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare.

This lonely hill was always dear to me
and this hedge that all about shuts out
the last horizon. But sitting here in thought
I turn my mind to endless spaces beyond that hedge
and superhuman silences and the profoundest peace;
whereof my heart is almost afraid.
And when I hear the wind that stirs among these trees,
Then I compare that infinite silence to this voice;
and I recall eternity and the seasons which are no more,
and this present and living one and the sound of it.
Thus on this immensity my thought is drowned. And
Shipwreck on this sea is sweet to me.

* * *

And so, here we are again. The dream has taken a new turn. The spirit of the sleeper is become restless, will no longer be contained in the closed space, by the walled garden. There beyond the wall is again the memory of the disturbing mystery, beyond the hedge that shuts out the last horizon there is still the last horizon, and beyond that, infinite reaches of space and time. The spirit of man (we look at what we see in a dream) enters upon a journey again, an outward journey this time beyond the wall. And now, in that immensity beyond, shipwreck is even *sweet* to him. That is surely a sentiment which neither the Middle Ages nor the Renaissance would quite have understood. We come here into a mood peculiar to a modern time. We come to Romanticism.

* * *

And so to those three moments of a dream I have given labels which all of you will already have assigned to them: Dante, Boccaccio, Leopardi; Middle Ages, Renaissance, Romanticism. Three masters, three epochs, defined by what in each case is discernible as the master pattern of that dream which men are forever dreaming of themselves.

I take it that no one who knows the Middle Ages even superficially will be inclined to deny to Dante and to his *Comedy*

the privilege of representing that age. Neither can I imagine that there could be much question as to whether Leopardi's "Infinito" might not stand as the delegate in miniature of the spirit of Romanticism. But what of Boccaccio and that very long stretch of time in which we have claimed that his *Decameron* holds up the tuning fork? The pattern and the mood that we distinguished for that epoch was, first of all, one of escape, of refuge to a space enclosed, and then a mood of going nowhere. But this stretch of time is the Renaissance and if we hold that it extends, for Italian literature, to the very end of the 18th Century, why, then it includes a Columbus and a Vespucci and many another explorer. It includes a Copernicus and a Galileo and the restless spirit of science intent on conquests of new worlds everywhere.

I am glad to face the question here for it can serve as a reminder that I began by viewing my subject, which is a modern European literature, as a dream, as one long dream. I meant by that figure to point to the way in which a literature can be and so often is cut off from the busyness of life. The dream can hold to a course of its own with something of the inner stability of the gyroscope, at times denying most radically the bustle and the fleeting daydreams addressed to more outward moments. This is so with the *Divine Comedy* and it is so with the poetry of Leopardi, if we put these achievements beside a growing commerce among free Italian cities in the one case and the industrial revolution in the other. Italian literature of the Renaissance, if we choose to think of it against the background of the explorations we have just recalled is, then, only an extreme case. But that it is.

Or it may be that since the literature itself, of that long period, must include an Ariosto for one and a Tasso for another, some of my present audience will think to point by way of such names to a more serious contradiction within the dream itself; will raise the question, that is: How can the mood of "going nowhere" be said to be the dominant one in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*? Do

we not indeed have quite the opposite impression when we read that work? Is not the beautiful Angelica forever dashing off through some deep forest? And is not someone, Rinaldo, or Orlando, or some Saracen, ever in hot pursuit of her? Do we not feel everywhere in the poem the most feverish, the most furious movement?

If these are advanced as serious objections to my formulation (and I hope I do not appear to be setting up a man of straw), then I should know that I have been misunderstood. And I could only ask my critic to return to the *Furioso* and test his sense of its dominant mood again. There is, to be sure, aplenty of movement there. This, after all, is an epic and here are battles to be fought. Paris herself is besieged and must be defended against the Saracen. But, for all the feverish activity, is there really any sense of goal here? That is the test of the mood. Victory over the Saracen infidels and the successful defence of Christendom ought to be goal enough. But is it? All sensitive readers of the poem will agree, I think, that it does not prove to be goal enough; or if it is then the poem must be losing sight of that goal at every turn. Watch Rinaldo, for instance, who is dispatched in great haste to seek help from the English for Paris, so hard pressed that the Saracens are at its very gates. What does Rinaldo do? He gets caught in a terrible storm at sea, first of all. But that of course is something quite beyond his control. He lands finally on the coast of Scotland and comes to one of those monasteries which in Romance are so conveniently hidden away in waste places and dark forests. But does he ask those holy men there what the quickest way to the English court is so that he can make up for precious time already lost, so that he can get help to his beloved king Charlemagne and to the Christian world that is tottering? Not at all. He asks if there are any good adventures around these parts that a fighting man might find interesting. And since of course there always are, he sets off on one forthwith and before long we are watching him riding along with a beau-

tiful maiden up on his horse behind him—with Charlemagne, Paris, France and all of Christendom completely out of mind. And of course the poet himself from time to time looks in on this world of fantasy and smiles. He knows why all this is as it is. *He* is pulling the strings. And why should he not put them this way? What's all so serious? Is there really any hurry about getting Rinaldo back to Paris, about getting anyone anywhere in particular? No, clearly not. In fact, there is even some danger that the reader will lose interest out of the realization and knowledge of that very fact. And so the poet must keep things moving furiously all the time.

Tasso chose quite another subject and took hold of it in quite another way: Jerusalem to be delivered by Crusaders from the hands of the infidels. It was a great theme, a solemn one. Nor is Tasso disposed to overlook the solemnity of it, particularly after a Council of Trent had had things to say about the frivolous spirit of the age. He marshals his Christian forces in noblest epic spirit toward the deliverance of the Holy City. God Himself and God's angels look down on this struggle and give assistance in the supreme assault. Here, in the *Gerusalemme liberata,* we may not deny a conception of a goal, of "having somewhere to go." And yet, any reader of the poem knows that Tasso's inspiration comes to him precisely at those points where he permits his heroes to forget their goal, where he allows them to go off to some place of delight with this or that beautiful enchantress, to seek escape and retreat to some earthly paradise not unlike that which the storytellers of the *Decameron* found in their refuge from the plague. Even with Tasso, even in a religious epic, even after the Reformation and the Council of Trent and all the high serious that represents, the dream of the Renaissance remains, in spite of high resolve, a dream of escape, escape to a walled garden. The pastoral theme, in short, is still the drift of the dream; and Tasso's masterpiece is not the *Gerusalemme liberata* but a pastoral drama, the *Aminta.* The pastoral is the

dominant mood all the way through, through an Arcadia that reached to Foscolo, Manzoni, and Leopardi and the threshold of the Nineteenth Century.

Three epochs, three moods: one, a journey to God; another, nowhere to go; a third, an outward journey to the infinite. These are the patterns. And you will no doubt have wondered already whether I was thinking that Italian literature had any monopoly of them. Indeed I do not. On the contrary, and as the names we have assigned to them have clearly enough indicated, these are master patterns in a dream which belongs to no one nation of western Europe, but to all of them. These are in fact master patterns which cannot even be understood within the confines of any single literature nationalistically conceived. But that I take to be no outrageous pronouncement in a series such as the present one, concerned with what makes literatures *world* literatures.

ALFRED SENN

Vincent Krėvė, Lithuania's Creator of Heroes

THERE is not much information in English available on Lithuanian literature. There is the *Outline History of Lithuanian Literature* by Antanas Vaičiulaitis, a small pamphlet published in Chicago in 1942. There are, moreover, several articles in encyclopedias and other reference books, e.g., my own contributions to the *Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature* (New York, 1947) and to the *History of Modern Drama* edited by Barrett H. Clark and George Freedley (New York, 1947), and the article of Anthony Salys on Lithuanian language and literature in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* Supplement II, Second Section, Vol. XVIII (New York, 1951).

The history of Lithuanian literature begins with the year 1547 when the first Lithuanian book appeared in Königsberg, East Prussia. There are no Lithuanian texts, printed or in manuscript form, prior to 1547. The book of 1547 was a translation of a Protestant catechism. The translator wrote his name in the Latinized form, *Mosvidius*. However, the correct Lithuanian form was probably Mažvydas, and the man is now usually referred to by his name.[1]

For over two centuries, Lithuanian literature was exclusively religious in character, serving the spiritual needs of the Catholic Church and of the Lutheran and Calvanist Protestant denominations. The books of this initial period are primarily of interest to

[1] Cf. Vaclovas Biržiška, *Martin Mažvydas (Mosvidius) und seine Mitarbeiter*, Sonderbeilage der Zeitschrift *Scholar* Nr. 2/3 (Heidelberg, 1948). Cf. also Vaclovas Biržiška, "Abraham Kulvietis, The First Lithuanian Humanist." *Contributions of Baltic University*, No. 47 (Pinneberg, 1947).

the linguist or philologist, the student of the history of the Lithuanian language. Of greatest importance in this respect, beside the already mentioned *Catechism of Mosvidius,* are the writings of Mikalojus Daukša, who died 1613, and Constantine Širvydas whose activity falls in the first half of the seventeenth century.

In appraising the situation properly, it is important to point out that Lithuanian did not obtain the status of an official state and school language until 1918 when Lithuania was made an independent republic. The original text of the Declaration of Lithuanian Independence, signed and proclaimed by the Lithuanian Council in Vilna on February 16, 1918, was written in Lithuanian, but the official documents of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania (existing from the Middle Ages through the end of the eighteenth century) had been drawn up in Latin, White Russian, or Polish. During the Russian domination of the nineteenth century, the use of Russian was compulsory in all walks of life, while in Prussian Lithuania, German held a similar though not brutally enforced position. Thus, the declaration of February 16, 1918, was not only an act of political, but also linguistic, liberation. Today the Lithuanians boast of a standard language in which everything interesting the human mind can be discussed. A systematic catalogue of Lithuanian books published during the first two decades of Lithuanian independence was brought out in 1938 and contains about 7,100 individual entries: Izidorius Kisinas, *Lietuvišku knygu sistematinis katalogas* (Kaunas, 1938). All the books listed in this catalogue are written in the standard language and bear testimony to the genius of the nation.[2]

However, the fact remains that prior to 1918 the Lithuanian language had never been a state language, and this lack of official recognition and support had delayed the formation of a standard language and, naturally, also the deployment of literary

[2]Cf. Alfred Senn, "Standard Lithuanian in the Making," *The Slavonic and East European Review,* XXII (1944), pp. 102-116.

creative activity. It is, therefore, all the more astonishing that a Lithuanian literature, in the proper sense of the word, did come into existence as early as the second half of the eighteenth century. The great poet of that period was Christian Donalitius, a Prussian Lithuanian who studied Protestant theology in Königsberg and then became pastor of the Lutheran parish of Tolmingkehmen in East Prussia. Donalitius, who was born in Lasdinelen, East Prussia, January 1, 1714, and died in Tolmingkehmen February 18, 1780, after his death in unpublished form left six animal fables and five idyls describing Lithuanian country life, all written in hexameters, that is, lines of six feet or measures, a grand total of 3,517 hexameters. A first edition was made by L. J. Rhesa in Königsberg in 1818. Donalitius was influenced by the general literary trend prevailing in Germany and western Europe during his lifetime, but his own poetry differs by an outspoken realism.

There is a problem connected with the surname "Donalitius." The only form ever used by the poet himself is Donalitius. Modern Lithuanian schoolmasters regarded this as a corruption of "Duonelaitis." However, in his poems the poet makes a clear distinction between the diphthong *uo* and the monophthong *o*, and it is to be expected that he would have kept the diphthong *uo* in his own name if he had considered it as belonging there. Formerly, Lithuanian scholars derived the name from the noun *dúona* ("bread,") respectively from a verb *duoneliáuti* ("to go around begging for bread.") This explanation was made in complete disregard of the general trend of the Lithuanian name system. Lithuanian surnames are not formed that way. It is now clear and recognized by Lithuanian scholars that Donalitius is a patronymic of the Christian name Daniel and meant originally "Son of Daniel." Consequently, the Lithuanian scholar, Anthony Salys, writes the name now "Donalaitis." My opinion is that the form was originally "Donaličius," with a White Russian patronymic suffix *-ič* (as in Russian *Kuzmič,*

Lukič, Fomič, Iljič, Nikitič, Savvič) extended to Lithuanian *-ičius*, and was then Latinized to *Donalitius*.[3]

In the nineteenth century, literary activity starts to blossom in Lithuania Major, that is the part of Lithuania which had been occupied and annexed by Russia in 1795. This first Russian occupation and domination of Lithuania lasted just about a hundred years, up to World War I. The vigorous burst into bloom of Lithuanian literature in that period is one of the many demonstrations of the will of the people not to accept the foreign yoke. Lithuania Major went through a national revival and from now on assumes leadership in all national Lithuanian affairs, while Lithuania Minor, also called Prussian Lithuania, now plays a very minor role. During that first century of revived Lithuanian culture, Lithuanian literature boasts three outstanding figures, namely, the romanticizing writer on historical subjects, Simon Daukantas (1793-1864), the churchman and conscientious trustee of his flock, Bishop Matthew Valančius (1801-1875), and the nature poet, Bishop Anthony Baranauskas (1835-1902). Unfortunately, the enjoyment of their works by modern readers is impaired by the fact that they are written in dialects which differ considerably from the modern standard language.

The political movement gets stronger and stronger during the second half of the nineteenth century, and hand in hand with it goes an ever increasing literary activity. During that period the trends of Lithuanian literature were determined by three factors: (1) the opposition to the Russian yoke and closer cooperation with the revolutionary movements agitating all parts of the Russian Empire, (2) the abolition of serfdom in Russia and therefore also in Lithuania Major in 1861 (in Prussian Lithuania this had been done half a century earlier), (3) the Russian government's official ban on printing in Latin characters. The ban on printing lasted from 1865 to 1904, and this

[3]Cf. Alfred Senn, "Lithuanian Surnames," *American Slavic and East European Review*, IV (1945), pp. 127-137.

period has been called the Forty Years of Captivity. It aimed at complete Russification of the country which was brutally enforced by means of deportation and imprisonment of all "dangerous" elements. It might have been successful, had it not been for the opposition of the Roman Catholic clergy who recognized in the Russification drive a serious danger to the Church. While the Russification drive as such failed, it was not without harm to Lithuanian interests, since some Lithuanians, especially in the province of Vilna, became Polonized during that period. Attempts were made by the Russian government to bring out Lithuanian books printed with Russian characters. However, the passive resistance of the population forced these attempts to fail completely, and they were given up after 1871. The need for reading material was satisfied by pamphlets and books printed in Tilsit, East Prussia, and smuggled into the country. The first to start this practice was the above-mentioned Bishop Valančius who, however, had only the interests of the Roman Catholic church in mind. Many of the books, smuggled across the state line, perished by falling into the hands of the Russian police. Available data indicate that in the two-year period between 1900 and 1902 about 56,000 copies of various Lithuanian books and pamphlets were confiscated by the Russians.

In 1883, the first political and literary magazine, *Aušra* ("Dawn"), appeared in Tilsit, East Prussia. Liberal in matters of religion but otherwise pursuing a rightist-nationalist course, it was founded by Dr. John Basanavičius (1851-1927), a political refugee living in far-off Bulgaria, who became the revered patriarch of the Lithuanian national revival. Almost equal in importance was *Varpas* ("The Bell"), a monthly journal combining leftist leanings with nationalism, whose guiding spirit was Dr. Vincent Kudirka (1858-1899), the author of the Lithuanian national anthem. Both *Aušra* and *Varpas* left a distinct imprint in Lithuanian literature. "*Aušra* was a stimulus to roman-

ticism, while *Varpas* brought out writers of the realistic school."[4] There were also Roman Catholic journals supported and edited by the clergy.

Out of the darkness of national captivity arose the first great lyric poet of the Lithuanians, the romanticist Maironis (pseud. of Reverend John Mačiulis-Maciulevicius, 1862-1932), a glowing patriot who inspired the entire nation with his poems preaching the gospel of national resurrection. Many of his poems have been set to music and acquired universal popularity. Since the name of the author of these verses is now taboo in Soviet Lithuania, they will, beyond any doubt, become nameless and survive as anonymous folk songs.

After Maironis there was for a long time no lyric poet who could be called really great, until out of the destruction of World War II appeared a small collection of the most impressive lyric poetry, perfect in form and content. The author was Vytautas Mačernis, born in 1920 in Žemaičių Kalvarija and died in Soviet Lithuania in 1945 at the age of twenty-five.

Ever since the end of World War I, Lithuanian literature has been dominated by the towering figure of Vincent Krėvė. I call him a towering figure in spite of the fact that physically he is no giant at all, actually less than five feet in height. I consider Krėvė the greatest Lithuanian poet and writer of all times. His rivals for first place are Donalitius and Maironis, but there is no question in my mind about the outcome of this rivalry. Donalitius must be eliminated because of his lack of originality. His hexameters were made in imitation of a literary fad prevailing at that time in western Europe. One might say that Donalitius wrote German poetry in Lithuanian words but added his own realism for which there was no German model at the time. Donalitius was a great poet, but Krėvė is greater. Even Maironis must come out second best in a comparison with Krėvė although

[4] Vaičiulaitis, *Outline History of Lithuanian Literature*, p. 28.

Maironis is undoubtedly original in the content, though not the form, of his poems. However, Maironis succeeded only in one genre, namely, the lyric poem but failed in the epic and the drama in which he tried his skill also. Krėvė, on the other hand, succeeded at least in two genres, namely, the short story and the drama.

Vincent Krėvė (full name in the Lithuanian form: Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius) was born October 17 or 19, 1882, in the village of Subartonys, Merkinė township, in southern Lithuania. On October 19, 1952, his many friends and admirers celebrated his seventieth birthday anniversary in a public ceremony in Philadelphia. On the same occasion, an international group of scholars, under the leadership of Professor Giacomo Devoto of the University of Florence, Italy, honored Vincent Krėvė with a *Festschrift*, a collection of scholarly papers, published in Florence as Volume IX of the magazine *Studi Baltici.*

As a boy, Krėvė was first meant to study for the priesthood, but these plans were later abandoned, and he studied philology at the Universities of Kiev and Lvov. After receiving his Ph.D. degree at the University of Lvov in 1908, he returned to the University of Kiev where he obtained the degree of Magister, entitling him to teach at Russian universities. He then taught Russian language and literature in Baku. While in Kiev, he became acquainted with the Russian writer Gorki. In 1920 he returned to Lithuania and became professor of Slavic Literatures at the University of Lithuania (1922-39), in Kaunas, and in Vilna (1940-44). He was dean (1926-39) of the Faculty of Humanities and the first president of the Lithuanian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Since 1947 he has been on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania where he teaches Russian and Polish literature.

Krėvė's original scholarly interest had been in the field of comparative Indo-European philology. Later he became more and more interested in folklore and literature. This change of

interest was, of course, prompted by the fact that he himself is an original creative writer.

Krėvė was first presented to the outside world in 1932 by the Italian, Giuseppe Salvatori, in a lifelike picture printed in the magazine *Studi Baltici* II, 23-34. A new description (this in the English language) of his work was given twenty years later by Vincent Maciunas in the jubilee volume of *Studi Baltici* mentioned above. Its title is "Vincas Krėvė's Place in Lithuanian Literature."

In his writings Krėvė displays a dual personality, depending on the subject matter or topic. He is now an exuberant romanticist, now an observant and even critical realist. He is a realist with deep psychological insight when in his short stories he describes Lithuanian peasants or peasant children of the twentieth century and their everyday chores and worries. There is nothing heroic about the personages of these short stories. These personages impress the reader because they are real, they are true human beings with hopes and frustrations, with virtues and weaknesses. On the other hand, Krėvė is a romanticist in his tales placed into pagan antiquity which are based on Lithuanian folklore material, such as semihistorical legends and fairy tale motifs. He uses even different styles for the two types of short stories. While the realistic short story dealing with modern Lithuanian life is written in a pure and noble everyday prose, all his legends or ethnical tales appear in a melodious rhythmic prose, an imitation and refinement of the style of folklore literature.

The same dual personality as in the short stories can also be found in the plays. Definitely realistic, even with a tendency to point out existing evils, is the play *Son-in-Law* (1922) which deals with a young wastrel, the son of a well-to-do farmer. Against the better judgment and advice of his elders, the young man runs away to America where he apparently expects the gold to grow on trees. His experiences in the coal mines of Penn-

sylvania bring him to his senses and he returns home to his duties and obligations as a reformed character and a sensible man. If Krėvė had written nothing but this realistic play and the realistic short stories, I would consider him worthy of highest praise and recognition, even the Nobel Prize. However, to his own people, the Lithuanians, Krėvė has endeared himself much more by his romantic writings than these realistic portrayals.

In Krėvė's life the romantic period came first. He first wrote poems in the style of the Lithuanian folk song. Then he turned to prose, cultivating both the short story and the drama. The realistic phase of Krėvė's literary work comes later in his life and shows a more mature stage of development.

Krėvė's romanticism is expressed most strongly in two early works, the drama *Sharunas, Prince of Dainava: The Tale of a Life According to the Ancient Poets* (1911) and the collection of tales or legendary short stories first published in 1912 under the title *Stories Told by Old People of the Dainava Country.* The *Sharunas* drama was again published in two volumes in 1923 and 1925 as Volumes IV and V of Krėvė's collected works *(Krėvės Raštai),* while the *Dainava Stories* appeared in at least four later editions, namely, in 1921, 1928, and still later.

Sharunas is a drama merely by its external form, being written in dialogue. It could just as well be called a lyric novel. Its main purpose is to exhibit the wealth of Lithuanian folklore material which the author had collected and which is used as background for an action that is projected into pagan antiquity. This is done on the assumption that almost any detail of modern Lithuanian folklore dates back into the most ancient times, an absolutely faulty assumption if judged by standards of historical truth. However, disregard of historical facts is quite natural to the romanticists. For a description of the plot of the *Sharunas* drama I am going to quote from the abovementioned article of Maciunas.

Sharunas is a legendary, not an historical prince. He is depicted here by Krėvė in a romantic spirit: Sharunas is an individual who shapes the history of the whole country. His mission is to unite the Lithuanians into one powerful state. . . . Sharunas feels punished by nature: he is an ugly hunchback. Everyone laughs at him, nor does he find happiness in love and joy in his own family; but he is very proud. As if in revenge, his heart is inflamed by a passion for great deeds and honor. . . . In those heroic days such honor could be found only on the battlefield. And thus Sharunas throws the whole Dainava country into a turmoil by his wars, battles, and by the blood which is being spilled on the battlefield. He wants to "fly in the world as only the eagle does." By and by, under the influence of the Bard Rainys, Sharunas forms for himself the final aim for his restless struggles. "There is only one sun in the sky, there is going to be only one ruler in Dainava, or the soil will not keep me alive." The older people cannot understand his plans and curse him because of the sufferings brought about by constant wars. Only the younger generation, attracted by the coveted honor of the battles, lines up with him. It is only after his death that his aim becomes clear to everyone. He falls in a battle in which he crushes the Teutonic Knights who appear for the first time on Lithuanian soil. Sharunas dies but his idea remains alive. All understand now that only political unity can save them from that new and powerful enemy.

It is interesting to note that today the whole of central and western Europe is in a similar situation as the Lithuanians were in the times of Sharunas, except that today the danger threatens from the East. As was stated above, Sharunas is not a historical person. The *Sharunas* story is absolute fiction. No trace of this personage is found in Lithuanian literature or historical sources prior to the first appearance of Krėvė's *Sharunas*. Since then, however, Prince Sharunas has become the Lithuanian national hero, a real person for most Lithuanians, similar to the role Wilhelm Tell plays in the hearts and minds of the Swiss. There is a difference, however, between these two national heroes: Wilhelm Tell is the defender of human rights, but Sharunas is the protagonist of nationalism.

Even more romantic than *Sharunas* are Krėvė's *Dainava Stories* (first edition 1912) which are written in the style of fairy tales and in rhythmic prose throughout. In the introduction we find the author's assertion that he is only relating what he has been told by old people living in that region. This assertion is similar to the statement included in the full title of *Sharunas* where we are assured that the truth of the *Tale of Sharunas* is vouched for by ancient poets. All the tales are definitely connected with actual localities in the Dainava Country that is an area extending to the south of Alytus, in the southernmost part of Lithuania. One of the tales included in the *Dainava Stories,* called "Gilshe," has been made available in German[5] and English[6] translations. In addition, I have written an analysis of its literary sources.[7] It might be of interest to look at this tale a little closer, because it is representative of other tales of this kind. Here is a brief sketch of the plot of the "Gilshe Tale."

The daughter of a rich nobleman falls in love with a servant of her father and therefore refuses all other suitors. When her lover asks for her hand, the old nobleman answers in this way: "I will give you my daughter when you are as rich as I. Now, leave my manor!" Thereupon the servant becomes a highwayman, robs and murders three merchants, whose bodies he buries under a bridge. With this stolen wealth he buys himself an estate and builds a magnificent manor house. Now the nobleman consents to the marriage. In answer to the question as to the origin of his wealth, the suitor declares that he has gone to the wars and has brought home rich booty. To his betrothed, however, he confesses the truth. But she now fears the revenge of the gods and refuses to marry before she knows what kind of punishment the gods have in store for him.

[5]Horst Engert (trans.), *Aus litauischer Dichtung Deutsche Nachdichtung* (2nd ed.; Kaunas & Leipzig, Ostverlag der Buchhandlung Pribatsch, 1938), pp. 25-54.

[6]English translation under my supervision in *The American Slavic and East European Review,* VI (1947).

[7]Alfred Senn, "On the Sources of a Lithuanian Tale," published as a chapter of *Corona,* ed. Arno Schirokauer and Wolfgang Paulsen (Durham, N. C., Duke University Press, 1941), pp. 8-22.

The youth desires to know what he may expect and upon the advice of an old hermit, who is endowed with supernatural power, he keeps a three-night vigil under the bridge where the three bodies are buried. Each night one of the three murdered merchants appears to accuse him before the gods. Upon the accusation of the first one, the voice of the gods promises punishment after ninety-nine years. At this news the girl is willing to marry the young man, because, in all probability, they would not live that long. After the accusation of the second merchant the period of grace is reduced to thirty-three years. Even this does not deter the girl. In the third night the period is reduced to thirteen years. But even now the girl is still willing to marry her beloved, for, she says, "Thirteen years is a long time, during which we both will spend many happy days and blissful nights. Afterwards, we shall perish together, suffer together, and, thus, share fortune and misfortune." And she marries him.

Years pass and the young couple prospers. But the inner unrest of the man grows continually. Especially fearful for him is the thought that his beloved wife will have to suffer for his crime. A raven, which he is about to shoot while hunting one day, speaks to him and promises him a remedy for his tortured soul. He is told to seek an old man in the land of the Prussians. This he does. This ancient one, who is the high priest of the heathen Prussians, advises him to take part in the war against the enemies of his country, the Teutonic Knights. Before his departure he must plant a dry linden twig in the earth at the place where the murdered merchants lie buried. When this twig brings forth leaves and blossoms, he will be called back from the battlefield, if at that time he is still alive.

The young man agrees to this and prepares for the campaign. But he gives up his plan upon the entreaties of his wife who wants to share fortune and misfortune with him.

Toward the end of the thirteen years, Sharunas, the legendary prince of the Dainava Country, while on a hunting trip, comes to the manor house of the couple and is hospitably received. But during the night a voice awakens him, urging him to leave the place. He does leave only after he has seen on the horizon a fiery glow indicating that his own castle must be in flames. After going quite a distance, he becomes suddenly aware that he has forgotten his sword. He therefore returns to the manor house but finds in its place a deep lake and a table floating near the shore with his sword upon it. The

manor house had sunk with lord and lady into the earth and in its place remains a deep lake named Gilshe. But every year on the night in which the manor house had disappeared, a lad and a lass play out in the moonlight in the middle of the lake, shrouded by mist.

The "Gilshe Tale" is typical of Krėvė's romantic legends. The fact that Prince Sharunas is introduced here in the role of the innocent stranger, who in the Lithuanian tradition of the international motif "Late Revenge" is mostly a priest, is indicative of how much this fictitious person, a creation of Krėvė's mind, meant to its creator. This was done with the specific aim to familiarize the Lithuanian readers with their national hero. At the same time, by introducing Sharunas into this tale, which was not originally Lithuanian, but medieval Latin, the poet succeeded in placing the action in the heroic Dainava Country.

The theme treated first in *Sharunas* is resumed in the drama *Skirgaila* which was first written in Russian and intended for an anthology of Lithuanian literature in Russian to be edited by Maxim Gorki. The anthology did not appear because of the war, and the Russian version of *Skirgaila* was published separately somewhere in Russia at the end of World War I. There are two Lithuanian editions of *Skirgaila,* the first in 1925 (*Krėvės Raštai,* Vol. 6) and the second in 1938. Unlike *Sharunas, Skirgaila* is absolutely perfect from the point of view of dramaturgy. The plot is more condensed and better organized. Actually, I cannot see how it could be criticized from the point of view of dramaturgic technique. It is the best historical play ever produced for the Lithuanian stage. This success is to a large extent due to the almost complete absence of the romantic tinsel prevailing in the earlier works.

The name of the hero, Skirgaila, is taken from history. He was a brother of King Jogaila. Skirgaila was Jogaila's regent in Lithuania. In Krėvė's play he is, like Sharunas, a prince of wrathful character, though less impulsive. He suppresses his passionate nature by sheer will power. His greatest wish is a powerful and great Lithuania, but

he sees that the old pagan Lithuania will never be able to withstand the pressure coming from the numerous powerful Christian enemies who surround it. Nor can the old heathen gods defend Lithuania. Skirgaila loses his self-esteem because, while a pagan at heart, he is forced openly to honor and respect the God of a foreign and hated nation. Since he no longer respects himself, he despises others as well. A succession of events prompted him to start to doubt the gods of his ancestors. Respecting only power and might, Skirgaila cannot respect gods after they have lost their power to revenge and punish those who have betrayed them. Thus, the action turns into a tragedy, and Skirgaila's tragedy is increased by troubles in his own family. In order to keep Lithuania united, he forcibly marries the princess of Lyda, Anna Duonutė. He knows that she does not love him but he longs for a few moments of idyllic peace in his own home to offset the worries coming from his office as head of the state. He fails in his love making. Anna gets ready to flee and is aided in her attempt by Keller, a Teutonic knight. Skirgaila discovers the plot and issues the cruel order that the knight sacrifice himself for his beloved lady and be buried alive.[8]

From the standpoint of dramatic structure, I consider the *Son-in-Law* and *Skirgaila* as Krėvė's best plays. They show Krėvė's greatness as a playwright. They are not the only real and great plays written by our poet. There are for instance *On the Path of Destiny* in two volumes *(Krėvės Raštai,* Vol. 7 and 8, 1926 and 1929), and *The Death of Mindaugas* (1935). Both these plays deal with Lithuanian problems.

Other works of Krėvė deal with Oriental motifs. Actually, Krėvė has been a diligent student of Oriental thought and poetry all his life. The latest attempt in this field is the biblical drama, *The Sons of Heaven and Earth* (Part I, 1949). Since our presentation is limited to works which bear specifically on Lithuanian history and folklore, we have to forego a discussion of the other aspects of Krėvė's creative activity.

On the occasion of the celebration of his seventieth birthday anniversary on October 19, 1952, Vincent Krėvė made the fol-

[8] Cf. Maciunas, *Studi Baltici,* IX.

lowing statement to the assembled admirers and well-wishers:

> When, while studying at the university, I had occasion to meet students of different national background who boasted about their glorious past history, I was seized by a desire to show the others that our history is greater than theirs. I was then impelled to re-create that Lithuania of old which with one hand fought off the onslaught of western Europe while with the other it conquered the larger part of that country which is now Russia. I wanted to show that through those battles Lithuania became the largest and most powerful state of that period. It seemed to me that, if those people could achieve such deeds, they must have been giants in spirit. And I made up my mind to portray the spirit and the soul of those giants, that is the spirit and soul of Old Lithuania. I did it, not in order to become famous myself, but in order that the Lithuanians, especially the young people, might obtain some self-respect and the conviction that we are not inferior, but rather superior to many nations which at present consider themselves great. . . . We are a heroic nation and powerful in spirit. This was all I had in mind when I created the *Dainava Stories, Sharunas, Skirgaila,* etc. This was my one and only idea. . . . And I am very happy today to see that I was understood the way I wanted to be understood.[9]

It is an unusual thing to hear such words from a creative writer, "I am very happy to see that I was understood the way I wanted to be understood." These are words from the mouth of a man who has changed a whole world and has lived to see the dreams of his youth realized. Krėvė has indeed created a new spiritual world for the Lithuanians. He has given Lithuanian culture a new physiognomy. No other Lithuanian in the entire course of Lithuanian history can boast of similar success.

[9] Cf. *Aidai 1952* (Kennebunk Port, Maine), p. 393.

HENNING LARSEN

The Folktale and the Revival of Norwegian Nationalism

TODAY if you ask any literate American about Norway, he may know something about her history and geographic location. This has been true for ten years only; and the knowledge is the result of the war and its aftermath. Prior to the war, educated Americans were at least cognizant of the country and her culture. They knew Ibsen and Sigrid Undset; they knew Grieg and Sinding, and the more sophisticated knew Hamsun, Vigeland, and Munch. Our scholars knew of Norwegian contributions to philology and to science; and our ardent travelers knew the land of the fjords and of the midnight sun.

It was not always so. Not longer ago than 1840 an English traveler and writer, William Bilton (incidentally a friend and admirer of the country) wrote: If the Norwegians were suddenly swept off the surface of the earth, they would leave no memorial of human achievement, material or spiritual, which could proclaim to coming generations that a large nation had lived for centuries in the extensive territory of this northern peninsula—no great work of architecture, no great contribution to science or literature. One century of oblivion and the world would forget the existence of the Norwegian people.[1]

This verdict is not wholly fair; yet as far as the world was concerned, largely true. The explanation is not far to seek. For over four centuries Norway was united with Denmark; government was centralized in Copenhagen; officialdom and the professional classes received training in Copenhagen and more and

[1] I have not seen the original volume. The above statement is a paraphrase based on a Norwegian text in Keilhau: *Det norske folks liv og historie* IX, 7.

more tended to use the Danish tongue; and, as far as Danish authority could contrive, Norway was reduced to the position of a province. What news of Norway reached the outer world came largely via Copenhagen or even Stockholm.

A sudden change in the fortunes of the country came with the Napoleonic wars when Norway, an unwilling partner of Denmark, was drawn into the conflict on the side of France. This led first to the English blockade of 1807-1814, and next to the arbitrary action of the powers, who at the Kieler Conference assigned Norway as spoils of war to Sweden. Actually, this scheme was cooked up by Karl Johan (Charles John, or Jean Baptist Bernadotte), crown prince of Sweden, and Czar Alexander of Russia to compensate Sweden for Russia's conquest of Finland.

All who know anything of Norwegian history are familiar with the immediately following events: Norway's declaration of independence, the adoption of the constitution, the election of Kristian Frederik as king, the war with Sweden, and, finally, the union of Norway with Sweden—a union that lasted until 1905.

Norway was again an independent nation, and, nominally at least, she was the equal of Sweden in the union. Terribly impoverished by the war and the burden of postwar reconstruction, Norway spent her first years of peace in regaining economic solvency. With the struggle went a national awakening —a strenuous, conscious effort to cultivate what was Norwegian, a jealous guarding of national rights.

Tonight I want to discuss one phase of this movement—the interest in national traditions; more specifically, I want to focus on the contributions of two men, Peter Christen Asbjörnsen and Jörgen Moe, to the study of Norwegian folklore and try to show what these men did to renew interest in traditions that rooted deep in the life and consciousness of the common people.

In 1814, when Norway took her place among independent nations, she had a small and relatively prosperous class of mer-

chants, landowners, and professional men, who possessed all the cultural refinement of the general European society. Contacts with England and France had made this class a liberal minded, forward-looking group, which sought national growth through democratic ways and ideals. This class was slowly becoming aware of and interested in the homely, indigenous culture.

By far the larger part of the population represented a rural culture of farmers and cotters gaining a modest living from agriculture, fishing, mining, and lumbering. This population, conservative by nature, lived almost untouched by Danish culture—except for the linguistic influence of the Church and the Danish Bible. They had their peasant art in building, wood carving, smithcraft, and weaving; and they preserved a folk literature thoroughly national and having deep roots in the earliest life of the people.

It was this indigenous literature that Asbjörnsen and Moe tried to preserve—yes, much more than preserve, to present in such a fashion that it should become the possession of all. They succeeded beyond their wildest dreams. Their collections—especially in the famous illustrated editions—have become part of the very life and breath of the whole nation. In influence the books are second only to the Bible. Every school reader carries extracts; and editions by the score, large and small, cheap and costly, have for a hundred years rolled from the press.

The work of the two authors appeared in four main collections —what we might call "the authorized versions." These fall in two groups: *Norske folkeeventyr* (folk tales, fairy tales, "märchen"), a hundred and ten tales in all, of the type we know so well from Grimm's Fairytales, and *Norske huldreeventyr og folkesagn*, legends attached to historical characters and definite localities.[2]

[2]The *folkeeventyr* are represented by two collections:

1. *Norske Folkeeventyr* samlede ved Asbjörnsen og Moe, published in sections from 1841-1844, the "Förste Deel" in book form dated 1843. Of "Anden Deel" only the first section appeared, 1844. To historians this is known as "fællessamlingen." Enlarged, revised, and republished, it ap-

The fundamental difference between the two types is that, to the storyteller, the former is fiction but the latter "historical truth"—the events recorded happened to known people.

The *eventyr* begins: "Once upon a time there was a king and queen . . . " or "Once upon a time there was a man who had a cat . . . " The scene of the action is no more definite than the time. Tom, Dick, and Harry (or in the Norwegian Per, Paal, and Esben) come to the king's palace; Esben wins the king's daughter and half the kingdom; but, real as the kingdom is, you know only that it is *the kingdom.* In one tale Aase the Goose-Girl gets the King's son of England; but this England is just a never-never land, far away.

Let us look at one of the simplest of all—an animal story stripped of everything but essentials.

THE RABBIT THAT GOT MARRIED[3]

Once upon a time a rabbit was out frisking on the green. "Oh, hurrah; hip, hip hurrah!" cried he as he jumped and skipped. Every now and then he turned a handspring and then danced on two legs through the grass.

Along came a fox, slinking.

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peared in five editions in the authors' lifetime, and in its final form contains sixty *eventyr.*

2. *Norske Folke-Eventyr,* fortalte af P. Chr. Asbjörnsen. *Ny Samling* (Med Bidrag fra Jörgen Moes Reiser og Optegnelser). Christiania, 1871. In its final form it contains fifty *eventyr.*

The *huldreeventyr* also appeared in two collections:

1. *Norske Huldreeventyr og Folkesagn,* fortalte af P. Chr. Asbjörnsen. Förste Samling. W. C. Fabritius, Christiania, 1845. This, revised and enlarged, was published as *Anden Forögede Udgave,* Christiania, 1859. The original edition had fourteen stories (or groups of stories); the second edition increased this to sixteen.

2. *Norske Huldreeventyr og Folkesagn. Anden Samling.* Jac. Dybwad, Christiania, 1848. This contains six groups of stories including the famous "Rensdyrjagt ved Ronderne," from which Ibsen drew his *Peer Gynt.* A second edition, published by Steensballe, Christiania, 1866, adds two selections—eight in all.

[3] This translation is based in part on that of G. W. Dasent: *Tales from the Fjeld,* London, 1874. I have taken the liberty of changing *hare* to *rabbit;* Dasent calls the tale "The Hare and the Heiress."

"Hallo, how are you," cried the rabbit, "I'm so happy today, for I got married this morning, I want you to know."

"That's fine!" said the fox.

"Oh, not so fine: she was pretty well along in years; and she was a shrew of a woman."

"Too bad!" said the fox.

"Could have been worse," said the rabbit; "she had riches and house to boot."

"Excellent," said the fox.

"No," said the rabbit, "not excellent; the house burnt and all our belongings."

"Too bad," said the fox.

"Oh, not so bad," said the rabbit, "The old woman burnt too."

In the *huldreeventyr* and the *folkesagn* (i.e. the legends) everything is different. The author usually appears in person; an actual scene is described; the storyteller takes the center of the stage and is frequently more important than the legend itself. A good example is *En Nat i Nordmarken:*

"A bright day in July, with air as clear as September, a gleam of sun over the Bærum hills, a chance fragrance of pine—all combined to stir me[4] (closed up as I was in the sultry heat of the city) and roused in me all the latent longing for the mountain stream and the pine woods."

Next follows the tramp through the hills, trout fishing, an encounter with three old tramps, the evening around the campfire, and stories—weird tales of the hulder and other sprites of the woods, and, finally, return to civilization.[5] This is not a fairy tale; it is genre painting.

Let us return to the *eventyr* and have a fuller look at it. Animal tales abound. Some explain traits or peculiarities of the beasts, as *Why the Bear is Stumpy-Tailed* or *The Fox as Herdsman;* others, of the fable type, have a moral or have had one. A

[4] I. e. Asbjörnsen

[5] See *Norske Huldreeventyr og Folkesagn.* Förste Samling. Christiania, 1845.

good example of the latter is *Father Bruin in the Corner,*[6] a story known in variant forms from India to Iceland.

FATHER BRUIN IN THE CORNER

Once upon a time there was a man who lived far far away in the woods. He had a lot of goats and sheep but never could keep them safe from the wolves.

At last he said: "I'll try to trick old Greylegs"; and he set to work to dig a pitfall. When he had dug it deep enough, he set a pole in the middle, placed a board on the pole, and on the board he set a little dog. Over the pit he spread boughs and branches and leaves, and on top of all he spread snow to hide the pit from the wolf.

As time went on and the night got cold, the dog got tired of sitting there: "Bow-wow, bow-wow," he said, and bayed at the moon. Just then a fox came by, slinking and sneaking, and he thought he had a chance for a bargain. With that he gave a jump—and . . . plunk down into the pit.

As the night got on, the little dog grew so tired and hungry, it fell to yelping: "Bow-wow-wow-wow." Just then up came Greylegs, trotting and trotting. He, too, thought of a good fat steak, and he, too, gave a jump for it—plunk into the pit.

Toward dawn came a damp, biting, north wind; it grew awfully cold, and the little dog froze and shivered, for he was so cold and tired and hungry: "Bow-wow-wow-wow," said he and barked and yelped. Along came a bear, shuffling and shuffling. A pre-breakfast bite would taste good, thought he; so he lumbered out toward the pole—plunk into the pit.

A little later in the morning an old beggar woman came limping along; she was wandering from farm to farm with her pack on her back. When she caught sight of the little dog, she just had to peek down to see what the catch might be. Down on her knees she went and leaned over:

"Well, well old Reynard, are you in the trap at last?" for she saw him first; "Good enough for you, you chicken thief. And old Greylegs, too; you may have torn many a goat and sheep, but now you'll get yours! Well, well, Bruin, are you there in the corner, you mare-skinner! We'll skin you, and we'll flay you and your skull we'll nail to

[6] G. W. Dasent: *Tales from the Fjeld,* London, 1874, p. 63.

the wall," yelled the woman. Just then her pack fell over her head and dragged her—plunk into the pit.

There the four of them sat, each in his corner, glaring at one another—the fox, Greylegs, Bruin, and the old crone.

When daylight came, Reynard shook himself and started slinking about—he had some hope he might get out.

"Can't you sit still, you waggle-tail and not go twisting and turning," said the crone; "Just look at Old Bruin sitting as grave as a judge;" for she thought she might as well make up to the bear.

Just then the owner came. First he pulled out the beggar woman, and next he slew all the beasts, and he neither spared Father Bruin, nor Greylegs, nor Reynard Waggle-tail, the thief. That night he felt he had a good haul.

This story Moltke Moe[7] heard told by an old, old woman in the dim light of the open fire in a small Norwegian mountain hut, and he said to himself: "Never did I hear anything more indigenous—more genuinely Norwegian." And yet—! this is an ancient Hindu tale, *The Brahman and the Beasts,* which spread from India all over Europe and was included also in the Chronicles of Matthew Paris.

The Hindu tale is the story of the grateful beasts and the thankless man; the moral is the most significant part. The Norwegian tale, after centuries of oral tradition, has completely lost the moral; the *introduction* has become the *story.*[8]

Other stories border on farce (*schwänke* as the Germans call them)—comic in action and comic in wording. Such are *The Boy and the Devil (Fanden i Nötten)* made famous by Ibsen in *Peer Gynt, The Boy Who Went to the Northwind,* and *The Parson and the Clerk.* Of the last one we would again say: "Norwegian to the last tittle;" yet we have versions recorded from every part of Europe—over six hundred in all.

The fame of this story is such that I must read it.

[7]Moltke Moe, the son of Jörgen Moe, became the editorial assistant of Asbjörnsen and later his literary heir to whom was entrusted the task of keeping the stories up-to-date—i.e. to keep pace with the Norwegianization of the language. Later he became the first professor of folklore at the university.

[8]See Moltke Moe: *Samlede Skrifter* I, 192.

THE PARSON AND THE CLERK

Once upon a time there was a parson, who was such a bully that he screamed out a long way off, when anyone came driving toward him on the road: "Out of the way; get out of the way! Here comes the parson."

One day as he was driving along and carrying on as usual, he met the king. "Out of my way, out of my way!" he shouted—ever so far off. But the king drove straight on, and this time the parson had to turn aside. When the king drew alongside, he said: "Tomorrow, you will appear at the palace. Then I shall set you three questions; if you do not answer them you'll lose both gown and ruff—for your pride's sake."

That was a new tune for the parson. He could bawl; he could shout and carry on; but problems and answers were out of his line. So he went to the clerk, for people said he had a smarter tongue. The parson said he had no mind to go, "for a fool can ask more than ten wise men can answer"; and he sent the clerk in his stead.

Well, the clerk set out dressed in gown and ruff. The king, with crown and scepter, met him at the door; he was so fine he glittered a long way off.

"Oh, you are there, are you?"

Yes, he was there sure enough.

"Now, tell me first," said the king, "how far is it from East to West?"

"Why, a day's journey," said the clerk.

"How do you make that out?" asked the king.

"Well, don't you see, the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, and he does it easily enough in one day," said the clerk.

"Very well," said the king; "but tell me now, what you think I am worth, as I stand here before you."

"Well, our Lord was valued at thirty silver pieces, and I suppose I can't put you over twenty-nine."

"Not so bad," said the king, "since you are so clever, tell me what I'm thinking right now."

"Why, you surely think I'm the parson; but so help me, I'm only the clerk."

"Off with you," said the king; "from now on you be parson and let him be clerk."

And so it was.[9]

[9]Based on the translation of H. L. Brækstad, *Round the Yule Log*. My copy has no date.

Some stories deal with the supernatural, often elaborate, almost epic in scope like the old favorites *East of the Sun and West of the Moon, Soria Moria Castle,* and the *Three Princesses of Hvittenland.* These, too long to read here, are Norwegian versions of the myth of Cupid and Psyche.

The fairy tales follow set forms. I have already spoken of the conventional beginning, as standardized as the classical "Sing to me, Oh Muse!" or the Old English "Lo, I have heard of the glory of kings of old." The conclusion also is reduced to formula: ". . . and for a long long time they lived happily, and if they are not dead they are still living."

The plot is of necessity simple; for oral transmission has stripped off all nonessentials. Few people are on the stage at once—usually only two speakers; and all characters are reduced to types. When we meet the three brothers Per, Paal, and Esben, the two older are always alike—useless, envious, and mean; the youngest, Esben Cinderlad, is always quick, good-natured, active, and successful. The good and the bad are set in bold contrast: *True and Untrue, The Man's Daughter and the Woman's Daughter.*

Stylistically, the stories favor repetition. The boy finds three beautiful girls; to save them he kills three trolls; the first troll has three heads; the second six, the third nine. He finds three swords, each heavier than the other, three bottles of magic drink, each gives more strength—and so on and on to a powerful climax.

The plot always comes to a clear-cut conclusion; there are never any loose ends. Evil is punished; good is rewarded.

May I read one more story; it illustrates almost all the characteristics I have mentioned. It is fairly long, has some of the traits of the epic, but is nearer akin to the comedies. In Norwegian it is called *Gjæte Kongens Harer;* in English we may use the inadequate title *Keeping the King's Rabbits.*[10]

[10]I have followed in part the version of Ingri and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire: *East of the Sun and West of the Moon,* which is again a modification of Dasent's translation in *Tales from the Fjeld.*

Once there was a retired farmer who had turned over his farm to his oldest son. He still had three sons with him. Their names were Per, Paal, and Esben called Cinderlad. They loafed around the house and wouldn't do a thing; for they fared well, and they considered themselves above ordinary work, and thought no job good enough.

But at long last, Per heard the king wanted someone to keep his rabbits. He told his father that that was the place for him, for he wanted to serve no less a man than the king himself. The old man thought some other work might suit him better, for he who kept the rabbits had to be limber and light; no one dead on his feet would do, for when the rabbits began to skip and dodge, it wouldn't be much like pottering around the farmyard.

Well, that couldn't be helped. Per must go and would go. So he put his knapsack on his back and trudged down the hill, and when he had walked far, and farther than far, he came to an old woman who had got her nose caught in a cleft log. When he saw her pulling and tugging to get loose, he began to roar with laughter.

"Don't stand there grinning," said the old woman, "but come help a poor body. I was going to chop some wood when I got my nose caught in the crack; now I've stood here, pulling and jerking, and haven't had a bit of food for a hundred years," she said.

But Per just laughed the more; he thought it really funny and, since she had stood there a hundred years, she could certainly bear it for another hundred, he said.

When he came to the king's palace he at once got the job as herdsman. It was not hard to get work there—good food, good pay, and a chance to win the princess! But if he lost one rabbit, the king would cut three red strips off his back and throw him in the snake pit.

Well, as long as Per stayed in the home field and in the cattle run, the rabbits stuck together; but, as the day went on and they came up into the woods, the beasts began to skip and scamper all over the hills. Per was on the run as long as he could see a rabbit. When the last disappeared and he had almost raced himself to death, he saw no more of them.

Late in the afternoon he strolled homeward. At the gate he gaped and gazed for a long time, but not a rabbit could he see. When he got to the house, the King was there with his knife ready. He cut three strips from Per's back, sprinkled them with salt and pepper and then—into the snake pit with him!

As time went on Paal wanted to be off to the King's court and herd the rabbits. The old man said the same to him—and a bit more. But Paal would go and must go, it just couldn't be helped. He fared neither better nor worse than did Per.

The old woman still had her nose caught in the log, pulling and jerking to get loose. Paal laughed and thought it a good joke, and he let her stay there and wriggle.

Work he got on the spot; he didn't get no for an answer. But the rabbits skipped and scattered all over the hills. It didn't help though he ran for all his worth in the broiling sun till he puffed and panted like a sheep dog. And when he came back in the evening, the King was ready with his knife, cut three strips from his back, sprinkled it with salt and pepper, and then—into the snake pit with him.

After a while Esben Cinder-lad wanted to be off and try his luck, and he told the old man about it. It seemed a wonderful job just to tramp in the woods and hills through the strawberry patches with nothing to do but take a snooze on the sunny slopes or ramble after a few rabbits.

The old man thought he might find a better job, for if he did not fare worse he would hardly fare better than the brothers. The chap who kept the King's flock could not drag along like a dead-head with leaden socks, or like a louse on a tar stick, for when the rabbits began to skip over the hillside he'd have a worse job than catching fleas with mittens on. To get away with a whole back, a fellow must be limber and light on his toes; he'd have to move faster than a dried skin or a bird's wing.

Well, that's neither here nor there, said Esben, for he would serve no lesser man than the King. The rabbits he'd manage somehow; they could not be much worse than the calves and goats at home.

So Esben put on his knapsack and trudged down the hill. When he had tramped farther than far, and he was getting good and hungry, he came to the old woman who was standing with her nose in the log, pulling and jerking to get loose.

"Howdy, Granny," said Esben, "are you standing there sharpening your nose, poor old soul?"

"Oh, nobody has called me Granny for a hundred years," said the old woman. "Come and get me out and give me something to eat, for I've not had a bite in my mouth all these years. Some day I'll do you a good turn, too," said she.

Yes, she might well need a bite and a sup, said Esben.

So he split the log, got her nose out, and began to divide his lunch. They sat down to eat, and the old woman had no lack of appetite, you may be sure, so she got the lion's share.

When they had finished, she gave Esben a whistle and told him how to use it. If he blew in the one end, everything he wanted to get rid of would scatter; when he blew in the other end, they would all come back. If the whistle was lost or got away from him, he had only to wish for it and it would come back.

"That's some whistle," thought Esben.

When he came to the King's place, he got a job as herdsboy. No trouble getting work there; and the food and pay would be good too. If he could keep the King's rabbits and not lose a one, he might even get the princess to boot. But if he lost as much as one teenie-weenie rabbit, they'd cut three red strips from his back. The King felt so sure he started to whet his knife then and there.

Nothing to this job, thought Esben, for when he started the flock was as tame as sheep, and as long as he stayed in the home fields and the cattle run they all stuck together. But when they reached the woods and the hillside about noon and the sun began to glare and burn in the clearings, the rabbits began to scatter everywhere.

"Well, off with you," cried Esben as he blew his whistle. The rabbits scattered to all corners of the world and out of sight. But when he came to a green glade by an old kiln, he blew his whistle at the other end, and before you could say Jack Robinson all were back lined up in rank and file so he could look them over like troops on parade.

"This *is* some whistle," thought Esben.

Then he went to sleep on a sunny slope and let the rabbits care for themselves. Toward evening he whistled them all back and led them to the King's yard like a flock of sheep.

The King and the Queen and the Princess, too, stood in the doorway and wondered what kind of fellow this might be who had the whole herd safely home.

The King counted and counted, and pointed and counted again; there was not the least little one missing.

"What a boy," said the Princess.

The next day Esben set out as before. As he was lazing about the strawberry patch, the Queen's maid came along to try to find out how it all happened that he could keep the flock.

He pulled out the whistle and showed it to her. He blew in one end and all the rabbits scattered; he blew the other and, in a twinkling, they were all back lined up in the glade.

That was a pretty fancy whistle, said the maid, and she would pay him a hundred dollars for it, if he would sell.

"Oh, yes, it *is* some whistle," said Esben. It wasn't for sale for money, but if she would give him the hundred dollars and a kiss for each dollar, he'd let her have it, he said.

Oh, sure, that she'd gladly do; she would gladly give him two for each and many thanks in the bargain.

So she got the whistle; but, when she came to the King's hall, the whistle was gone for Esben had wished it back again. Toward evening he led his flock home, and for all the King counted and pointed, it didn't help. He couldn't find as much as a whisker missing.

The third day he was out, they sent the Princess to try to get the whistle. She was just as sweet as sweet could be and offered him two hundred dollars if he'd sell her the whistle and tell her how to get it home.

"You know, it is quite a whistle," said Esben. It really is not for sale, he said; but for her sake he'd sell it if she would give him the two hundred dollars and a kiss to boot for each dollar. If she wanted to keep it, she had to watch it well—that was her business.

That is a high price for any whistle, thought the Princess, and it went a bit against the grain to give him the kisses. But as they were in the woods where no one could hear or see, she'd have to let it rip, for the whistle she had to have, she said. And when Esben got what he had coming, the Princess got the whistle, and she clutched it tightly all the way home. But when she went in to show it, it vanished from her fingers.

The next day the Queen wanted to try; she was sure she could get the whistle.

She was more stingy about the dollars and offered only fifty. Esben said the offer was ridiculous; she would have to make it three hundred and a smacking kiss for each dollar. There she was not stingy and gave him full measure.

She tied the whistle on and hid it carefully. But she had no better luck than the others. When she wanted to show it, the whistle was gone.

In the evening Esben came home with the flock as usual.

"Oh you are no good, any of you," growled the King. "If we are to get that damned whistle from him, I'll have to go myself. There is no other way out."

So when Esben had gone to the woods, the King set out after him and caught up with him in the same sunny patch where the women folk bargained with him.

They were the best of friends and agreed about everything. Esben showed him the whistle, let him hold it and try it. Quite a remarkable whistle, thought the King; he was set on buying it and offered a thousand dollars.

"Yes, it certainly is some whistle," said Esben, but it is not for sale for money. But do you see that white mare over there in the bog under the great pine tree?" he said.

"Sure," said the King, "that's my own horse, Whitey."

"Well, if you will give me a thousand dollars and kiss Whitey, you shall have the whistle."

"Not for sale for any other price?" asked the King.

"No, it isn't," said Esben.

"I take it, you'll let me put my silk handkerchief between?" said the King.

That he might. So he got the whistle, put it in his purse, and put the purse in his pocket. The pocket he buttoned tight. But when he got home and wanted to show the whistle, he was not better off than the women folk. He had no more to show than they. And Esben came home with not a rabbit missing.

The King was in a rage. He had been fooled and cheated! Now Esben should lose his life—no question about that. Always best to get rid of a rascal, the sooner the better.

Esben claimed that was not right and not just; he had done nothing but what they asked of him. So he had saved his back and his life as best he could.

"All right, all right," said the King, "if you can tell so many lies that you fill that big brewing vat, I'll spare your life."

"That," said Esben, "is neither a hard nor a long job."

He was sure he could do it, and so he began to tell how things happened right from the beginning. He told of the old woman with her nose in the log. Every now and then he threw in: "I have to think up quite a lot of lies, if the vat is to get filled."

Then he told of the whistle, about the maid who wanted to buy it

and all about the kisses she had to give to boot. Then he told of the Princess, how she came and kissed him so well because no one could see or hear it in the woods.

"I have to tell a lot of lies to get the vat filled," said Esben. Then he talked about the Queen—stingy with dollars but free with her smacks.

"I have to tell a lot of lies to fill the vat," said Esben.

"It seems pretty full now," said the Queen.

"Not at all," said the King.

Then he talked of the King, who came to him, and about the white mare in the bog, and how if he wanted the whistle he had . . . he had to . . .

"I beg your pardon, but I have to tell a lot of lies before the vat is full," said Esben.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute," cried the King, "Can't you see the vat is overflowing?"

The King and Queen thought they'd better give him the Princess and half the kingdom; it just couldn't be helped.

"That certainly was some whistle," said Esben.

With this story, let me dismiss the *eventyr* and come back to the local legends. The collections of these are the work of Asbjörnsen alone. The technique, as already mentioned, differs completely from that of the fairy tales. The legends themselves are often short and episodic. Taken singly they seem thin and many of them could easily grow tiresome. But Asbjörnsen groups them, introduces the story tellers, gives the setting and the background. For the first time in Norwegian literature we have an intimate view of the common people—real people whom Asbjörnsen knew and loved.

We see the life on the country estate, the servants around the open fire in the spacious kitchen telling of *hulder* and *nisse* and *troll;* we see an old city home on Christmas Eve where the family gathers and the old aunts tell spooky tales to eager children; we go hunting in the Ronde Mountains with Asbjörnsen, Sir John Tottenbroom, and the guide Thor Ulvsvolden; with them we spend the evening in the sæter, trudge the long weary miles of the upland, overtake and bring down the wild reindeer, stumble

over the boulder field in the growing darkness to the sod shelter where they spend the night. During each rest—at the sæter, during lunch on the boulder field, in the hut at night—we hear hunters' yarns of trolls and hulder; we hear of Peer Gynt's encounter with the trolls, his wild night with the *sæter* girls, his meeting with "the great Böyg"—the Böyg from whom he learns his life's motto "Gå utenom Peer."

This is Norwegian. It is the product of the romantic art then dominating the national revival. It is the height of romanticism—just as Ibsen's play and Grieg's music which grew out thereof. But Asbjörnsen's stories, just as Ibsen's *Peer Gynt,* foreshadow the rise of realism and naturalism. Asbjörnsen, though steeped in the romantic theories of his day (he never was an independent thinker), was by nature a realist. The framework of his stories is in accord with his theories; but when his characters enter the stage and their stories spring forth, we have the homely wording, the homely actions of real people. His gypsies and his lumberjacks, vulgar "toughs" with a quick and brutal tongue, often shocked the æsthetes of the day.

As important as the discovery of the people was the discovery of their language. Norwegian had an idiom and a linguistic intonation and rhythm wholly different from Danish. Both authors were sensitive to the native idiom and consciously cultivated it.

Both the *eventyr* and the *sagn* show the consistent effort of the compilers to catch the genuinely national and to imbue the written language with all that which made the colloquial language vital.

In the *eventyr* the success is so great we might think it effortless; yet, from collation of many editions, we find the end-product the result of experimentation and revision; through trial and error the modern *riksmål* was achieved.

The legends show even clearer evidence of Norwegianization. The settings are, even in the second collection, given in a fairly

conventional Dano-Norwegian, but the dialogue and the tales swing into pure Norwegian idiom—at times pure dialect. To the city-bred reader the language would present many difficulties in that day and age. Asbjörnsen actually added glossaries to help the "cultured" understand the "vulgar" tongue. Bibliographically these glossaries constitute an important feature of the editions of the *huldreeventyr,* for they reveal what linguistic elements were "new" and would seem strange; they underscore, as it were, the evidence for the nationalization of the language latent on every page.

Those of you familiar with the language of today will find it difficult to believe that the "hard words" requiring definition include: *åre, brok, bu, bås, lefsekling, leite, meis, muur, sau, staldtrev, stöl.* It is as though an American should need definition of blizzard, bronco, lariat, round-up, rodeo.

The gist of it all is this: After Norway became conscious once more of being Norway—and belligerently so—some people worked for her economic independence, some guarded her political independence, some strove for cultural independence. Of the last group no one achieved more than Asbjörnsen and Moe in understanding and making vital the literature and the language of the people; no one did more to shape national life and national character.

EDMUND ZAWACKI

The Major Chord in Polish Literature

ONE MONTH SHORT of 40 years ago at the University of Krakow in Poland, a great teaching career was begun with a lecture on a theme which might well have been called "The Major Chord in Polish Literature." On May 30, 1910, Ignacy Chrzanowski, the illustrious historian of Polish literature and one of the most loved teachers in the long and glorious history of the Jagiellonian University, gave his first lecture from the chair of Polish literature at Krakow on the subject which was his scholarly passion. Professor Chrzanowski did not survive his incarceration by the Nazi's in the concentration camp at Oranienburg where he, despite his age, was thrown in mass arrest with the entire faculty of his University in 1939. He died there, a mortally brutalized and outraged scholar. It is fitting, therefore, that we pay him a tribute of remembrance in the name of the literature for which he both lived and died.

Ignacy Chrzanowski began his teaching at the University of Krakow in the following words: "Of all those who have ever at any time or anywhere expounded the history of Polish literature, the greatest by far in the power of his intellect and ardor of his heart was Adam Mickiewicz, and it was he who declared that since the seed and source of the whole spiritual life of Poland is the 'dogma of patriotism,' 'Polish literature must needs be a development and application of this dogma, having sprouted, grown and flowered in the life-giving spirit of love of country.'"[1]

Somewhere in this quotation, I believe, there lies a definition of the major chord in Polish literature.

[1] Ignacy Chrzanowski: "O Literaturze Polskiej" in *Literatura a Narod* (Lwow, 1939) p. 24.

The question does arise, however, whether any national literature spanning several centuries in its historical development, can possibly have some one single characteristic which the passing of centuries has left essentially unchanged. Literary fashions and manners change. Theories of literature and of literary criticism are many. And not all critics and historians of literature will admit that in every national literature there vibrates a major chord so unique in tone or quality as to distinguish that literature from the literatures of other nations. However involved and debatable this problem may be, the fact remains that it is debatable by scholars on scholarly grounds, and one may take one's stand on either side of the argument—whichever appears more congenial or cogent.

We shall only be joining the company of Poland's most accomplished scholars and noblest spirits when we acknowledge that Polish literature does have a distinguishing major chord.

What is its essential quality? How can one apprehend it?

If we judge Mickiewicz's fervid declaration in the light of the best and truly great works of Polish literature over the span of several centuries, i.e., by those works which, like the loaves in the miracle on the mountainside near Galilee, have endured in the Polish consciousness undiminished in their spiritual substance, we cannot but agree with Mickiewicz that the dominant and peculiarly Polish trait in the best of Polish literature is a compelling dogma of patriotism, a conscious and intense solicitude for the welfare of the nation. Quite prosaically, the major tone of Polish literature is its patriotic political didacticism.

Not at all times in Polish literary history was this didacticism raised to the inspired level of a religio-patriotic gospel, as it was at its beginning in the period of Poland's political greatness, and as it was again in the nineteenth century in the period of political catastrophe, but the chord was struck at all times—now firmly and resonantly, now obliquely and faintly—and it was ever audible even amidst the most tumultuous excesses.

Situated as Poland is in the zone of contact between the cultural traditions stemming from Byzantium in the East and from Rome in the West, a choice was early forced upon Polish culture between the traditions of supreme temporal power (the Byzantine Emperor) and of supreme spiritual power (the Pope of Rome). Whether Poland chose the western tradition herself or whether history chose it for her, does not greatly matter. What matters is the fact that Christian culture came to Poland from the West, from Rome and not from Byzantium, that its teachings reached Polish hearts as well as Polish heads, and that the conditions of Polish life made very natural a close association between political and religious ideals. It is not surprising at all that love of country and love of God should have become inextricably intertwined in the greatest of Polish literature, and have developed into a uniquely beautiful and at times religiously exalted patriotic gospel.

This tone was first struck in what may be regarded as the most serious literary achievement of mediaeval Poland—the *Annales seu Cronicae inclyti regni Poloniae opera* by Jan Dlugosz (1415-1480). Better known simply as the Chronicle of Dlugosz, this monumental work was not literature in the strict sense of "belles-lettres," but it was the greatest literary achievement of fifteenth century Poland, and was an example of erudition, research and Latin literary style quite remarkable for its time. While still a mediaeval compilation, Dlugosz's chronicle reveals an effort to investigate cause and effect in history, an effort to arrive at a synthesis and conclusion. Frequently Dlugosz worked in a way we still admire in modern historical scholarship. He sought, as he himself narrates, to collect all the documents and records which had been scattered in churches and depositories in various places, compare them, connect them up, and incorporate them into his book. To be sure, his critical faculties were often insufficient to distinguish fact from legend, and his prejudices led him to ignore or even to distort facts with which

he must have been familiar. Likewise his personal sympathies and antipathies reflected themselves in his presentation of contemporary historical personages. But in every case, the touchstone of his judgement on people and events was the degree to which they enhanced or beclouded the glory of Poland and of God—as Dlugosz understood glory.

One must not overhastily interpret Dlugosz's attitude toward the glory of Poland in modern political terms, for this ancient Polish chronicler was a historian of mediaeval stamp, and he subscribed to the theocentric world outlook developed in Western Christian scholastic philosophy particularly by St. Thomas Aquinas and Thomas a Kempis. For Dlugosz, the highest destiny of man was to live morally according to the teaching of Christ, from which it followed that the Christian religio-moral ideal, or ethic, was the lodestone, as it were, toward which all other human cultural activity—intellectual, artistic, economic, and political—must inevitably tend. With the revival of the University of Krakow in 1400 as an institution enjoying the papal *placet* to teach theology, this theocentric outlook took firm hold in Poland. As early as 1414, at the great Church Council in Constance, the rector of the University of Krakow, Pawel Wlodkowic, brilliantly presented the Polish view that morality is indivisible, i.e. that it binds not only private life but political life as well, and that state policy no less than private behavior should be founded on Christian love. Dlugosz's understanding of Poland's glory, therefore, was not the glory of the sword but of the Word.

When he wrote toward the end of his chronicle, "Insofar as I had strength, my labors on this work were for the glory of my beloved country," he was giving direct personal expression to an intense patriotism conceived as a religio-moral obligation. His chronicle was both the result and fulfillment of this obligation, and so indeed, did he wish it to be accepted by his countrymen, for—as he continued in the same passage—

> "he is indeed a petty man who will not honor and sustain her (his country) with his gifts."[2]

Yet moral edification was not his only purpose; in political terms, he wished his chronicle to be used also as a guide to the right conduct of the realm, for to his mind, an understanding of the past should be the teacher of the present and future. We can see this latter aim more clearly in another passage describing the political events of 1466:

> And I the writer of the chronicle, take great comfort in the conclusion of the Prussian war, in the recovery of lands fallen in times past from the Polish realm and in the union of Prussia to Poland. For it pained me to see the realm hacked and torn by various peoples and nations. Now I regard myself and my contemporaries as fortunate because our eyes behold the unification of our fatherland into a single whole. I should be still happier if I could live to see by the grace of God the recovery and reunion with Poland of Silesia . . . With joy would I descend into my grave, and sweeter would be my rest.[3]

Surely, a conscious and intense personal solicitude for the welfare of the realm rings like a bell throughout this passage. To regard Dlugosz here as an imperialist gratified only politically by the territorial aggrandizement of his country, would be a mistake, for it would be ascribing to him our own modern habits of thought, which would be completely out of harmony with the deep religio-moral tone of the chronicle. The moral tone here is not hypocrisy. The greater glory of Poland which would sweeten the chronicler's rest, is the glory of growth in the grace of God, the success not so much of military power as of political gospel. That gospel had been written into the first of a series of political acts begun scarcely 40 years before the events Dlugosz describes, viz., the famous Act of Horodlo in 1413, characterized by Paul Super in his book, *The Polish Tradition,* as "the most

[2] Cf. I. Chranowski, *Literatura a Narod* (Lwow, 1939) p. 26.

[3] Cf. I. Chrzanowski, *Historia Literatury Niepodleglej Polski* (965-1795), p. 27.

Christian treaty of any land in any age,"[4] "a veritable continuation of the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians."[5] The text of this Act of Horodlo is worth recalling, for a theory of history and of human progress is involved which is quite at odds with that being imposed on the Polish people and on Polish literature today:

> In the name of the Lord, amen. May this deed be remembered forever. Because, as is known, no one shall gain salvation unless sustained by love, which goes not by crooked paths but which, being the shining light of its own goodness, brings agreement to those who disagree, reconciles those who quarrel, turns away hatred, destroys anger, and distributes the blessings of peace to all, gathers together that which is dispersed, raises up what has fallen, smooths the rough and straightens the crooked, succors all virtues, offends no one, loves all so that whoever practices it will find safety and need never fear; furthermore, because by love alone can laws abide, Kingdoms be ruled, states be administered, and the whole Republic attain its purposes; finally, because love is the highest of all virtues and whosoever shall hold it in scorn shall utterly lose everything good; therefore, we, the prelates, lords, gentry and plenipotentiaries of the kingdom of Poland do declare collectively and individually to all and each of those living today and to yet unborn posterity that since it is our innermost desire to abide under the protecting wing of love, we have conjoined and united . . . our houses and families, our coats of arms and seals with the gentry and boyars of the Lithuanian lands. May love unite us and make us equal—us, whom common religion, common laws, and common charters have already joined.[6]

It becomes clear from this historical document and from the others which followed it up to the final act of brotherhood between the Polish and Lithuanian nations at Lublin in 1569, that the Christian religio-moral ideal had found implementation in actual Polish political practice. Its prominence, therefore, in Dlugosz's chronicle is a reflection of something fundamental in

[4]Paul Super: *The Polish Tradition* (London, George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 1944) p. 40.
[5]*Ibid*, p. 90.
[6]Cf. Ignacy Chrzanowski, *Historia Literatury Niepodleglej Polski*, pp. 17, 18.

Polish value judgements and in the Polish style of life at the time, public as well as private. To hold a mirror up to life and to reflect it clearly and without distortion is one of the functions of any realistic literature. Applied to Dlugosz these terms are too modern. For him, his book was not realistic literary activity but submission to a categorical imperative of love—love of God inseparable from love of country.

I have for a specific reason dwelt in some detail on Dlugosz's chronicle and on the Christian ethic in Polish political life of the XVth century which it both reflects and exemplifies. The reason is simply that Poland's ancient glory must be understood as Christian moral greatness.

In the sixteenth century Polish literature cast off its mediaeval Latin garb and appeared in its own homespun but colorful Polish vernacular. Mikolaj Rey, whose first poem appeared in 1543, heads a procession of poets and orators of the 16th century expressing their thoughts in the Polish language partly as a matter of nationalistic pride (Rey) but mostly in order to serve their country. Public and private morality in this century had begun to deteriorate in Poland as elsewhere in Europe with the decline of the church. In a political system like Poland's at the time, in which the orderly functioning of government depended not on the centralization of power in the king but on the individual moral integrity and collective responsibility of its nearly a million enfranchised citizens, such deterioration presaged disaster. The great literature of the age, Poland's Golden Age, was, therefore, quite naturally permeated with politics. Jan Kochanowski, the sunrise of Polish poetry, could sing the Psalms of David in Polish worthy of the original's religious grandeur, he could lament the death of his four-year-old daughter in a cycle of threnodies unique in world literature for their poignant revelation of a father's grief, but also—moved by a deep and dignified patriotism—he could sound the alarm to his countrymen that the Republic was in danger. In his satires and in his

play, *The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys,* the author's conscious and intense solicitude for the welfare of his country, strikes the major chord of Polish literature not obliquely but firmly and vigorously with an earnest, indeed inspired, exhortation to civic responsibility. It was the prophetic virtue of his contemporary, the impassioned Jesuit, Piotr Skarga, to strike it desperately in his famous *Parliamentary Sermons* at the very time when Poland seemed to be at the height of her temporal power—"Cut open my heart and you will find in it only the words: we shall perish!"

In retrospect, as one penetrates into the best literature of the sixteenth century in Poland, one perceives a marked crescendo in the vibrations of the major chord. From the patient, persevering and, on the whole, pedestrian approach to moral and civic virtue by writers like Mikolaj Rey in his *Mirror of the Honest Man* (1558), Marcin Bielski in his *Knightly Skill* (1569) and *Parliament of Women* (1586), and Sebastian Klonowicz in *The Bag of Judas* (1600), the tone increases in intensity and clarity in the Christian legal didacticism of Andrzej Frycz-Modrzewski's *On the Improvement of the Republic* (1543) and in the elegant social cosmopolitanism of Lukasz Gornicki's *The Polish Courtier* (1566). It rises to earnest exhortation in Jan Kochanowski's satires, *Harmony* (1564) and *The Satyr* (1564), and in his drama, *The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys* (1587), until it culminates in the desperate call by Piotr Skarga in his *Parliamentary Sermons* (1597) for self-recognition, repentance, and patriotic regeneration in the name of God.

In the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries, we find a sharp diminuendo. Here, indeed, was a disastrous spiritual decline sadly but faithfully reflected by Polish literature. Professor Waclaw Lednicki in his brilliant book *Life and Culture of Poland as Reflected in Polish Literature,* describes the period succinctly:

The Polish nobility little by little lost interest in public life, in the

outer world, in letters, in arts, and abandoned itself to the rustic pleasures of the country .... The *szlachta* (fully enfranchised gentry) "sarmatizes" itself more and more, contrary to the great "international" and "universalist" enterprises of the sixteenth century; it leaves the cities, "disintellectualizing" them and impoverishing them as it finally disintellectualizes and impoverishes itself .... The seventeenth and, still more, the eighteenth century definitely stabilized this order of things .... In these circumstances, characters were softened, and the former tolerance, the former civic virtues, the old political and cultural ambitions, were transformed into indifference, quietism, egoism, resulting at last in the Polish obscurantism of the Saxon era.

There is only literature, which by a sort of paradoxical obstinacy keeps up its development throughout almost the whole century; but that also undergoes a period of stagnation during the Saxon era ....[7]

Literature was indeed obstinate, but it hung its head before the spectacle of Polish morals gone to seed. In the best of Polish seventeenth century writing, the major chord still vibrated with the love of God and country, only nostalgically rather than stirringly. Szymon Starowolski lamented in his *Lament of Our Harrassed Mother Poland* (1652). the ingratitude of his fellow citizens to their motherland, and saw the vengeance of God being sent upon them in the armies of the Cossacks and the Swedes who were plundering the country. Wespazjan Kochowski sang—as he averred, "for my own relief and the glory of God"—a confession of personal and national woe in the patriotically fervent prose psalms of his *Psalmody* (1695), and he searched the Polish horizon in vain for another Sobieski. Waclaw Potocki, feeling himself scourged by the judgement of God, could not but reveal concern for the country more than for himself. His religious lyrics as well as his kaleidoscopic pictures of the state of the realm *(Battle of Khotim)* fall short of the epic calm he strove for. Not all the writers, however, placed their country before themselves. Krzysztof Opalinski, although as a

[7]Waclaw Lednicki, *Life and Culture of Poland as Reflected in Polish Literature* (Ray Publishers: New York, 1944) pp. 114, 115.

writer he could castigate the decline of morals and civic responsibility among his countrymen, did nevertheless, in his capacity as the proud and self-willed Voyevode of Poznan, shamefully betray his country to the Swedes within five years of the publication of his *Satires* (1650).

In such a moral atmosphere literature, too, declined in moral stature and during the reckless feast in the midst of the plague which was the first half of the eighteenth century under the Saxon kings, Polish literature sounded like a harp lacking its deepest tones. It remained for the clergymen, Stanislaw Konarski, Franciszek Bohomolec, Adam Naruszewicz, Ignacy Krasicki, Franciszek Zablocki, Hugo Kollątaj, for the soldier Juljan Ursyn Niemcewicz, for the teacher-statesman-industrialist-scholar, Stanislaw Staszic, and for many others of lesser renoun, to restring the harp and, beginning in 1760 with the publication of *Konarski's On an Effective Method of Reform,* to jointly compose such a stirring symphony on the rediscovered major chord in Polish literature that they effected a most astounding national regeneration, political and moral. By 1791, Poland succeeded in instituting far-reaching reforms. The Constitution of the third of May was adopted in a bloodless revolution led by the king himself. In what other national history is there recorded a more impressive example of political regeneration than in the four-year diet from 1788 to 1791 in Poland, in which the very class which held all the power and enjoyed every privilege and license, assembled in parliament and, amidst heated debate, proceeded to vote these centuries-old privileges away in favor of a genuine broad-based democracy? Truly, the renewed vibrations of the major chord in Polish literature had set in motion a moral and political phenomenon worthy of the Act of Horodlo.

It came, however, too late to save the Polish Republic. Enclosed in a menacing triangle of rising Russian, Prussian and Austrian imperialism, Poland was dismembered by force. Her body politic, after Kosciuszko's desperate resistance had been

broken, was destined to remain partitioned by three empires throughout the entire nineteenth century.

This is the background against which nineteenth century Polish romantic poetry should be viewed, for what I have been describing so far in my account of Polish literary and politico-moral history is only the background in depth from which Poland's three national bards and greatest poets, Adam Mickiewicz, Juljusz Slowacki and Zygmunt Krasinski, drew their inspiration. Their entire poetic production, impeccable in form and limitless in variety and emotional color—from the earthy, sunlit, epic narratives of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadensz* to the symphony in Siberian white of Slowacki's *Anhelli* and the philosophically rarified messianism of Krasinki's *Dawnbreak*—is political and moral, and it revolves about love of country and of God as naturally and grandly as the earth revolves about the sun, growing and flowering in its life-giving warmth. In the poetic art of the national bards—only these three have been given that title of honor by the Polish people—the major chord of Polish literature indeed becomes the music of the spheres.

Sang Mickiewicz:

> I shall strike one wing against the past,
> The other against the future,
> And steering by the love in my heart
> Strive toward the feet of God.

The high moral purpose, the consciousness of a morally great historical past, and the sublime faith in its unbroken continuity into the future—which are here compressed by poetic genius into a few simple words—perhaps better than any other passage in Polish literature—or any other literature—teach a dogma of patriotism so sublime, so purified by national suffering and sacrifice and so deeply permeated with the Christian ethic, that this poetry can and does reach out beyond the confines of nationalism to the universality of Christ. Herein lies the essence

and the beauty of Polish romanticism and the secret of its grip upon the Polish people's heart and mind. The national messianism conceived by Mickiewicz and elaborated further by Slowacki and Krasinski, each in his own way, was an ethical approach to what was for these poets an ethical problem. They sought to understand why God had allowed their country at the very moment of its moral and political regeneration to succumb to mere brute force.

Neither to Mickiewicz nor to Slowacki nor Krasinski was there anything immorally proud or blasphemous in their concept of Poland as a Christ among nations crucified for the redemption of the mercantile Mammon-worshipping West. To their countrymen, oppressed and insulted in the homeland, the concept made moral sense, too, for the bards were unfolding to them what seemed to be a divinely ordered scheme of things on earth in which their sufferings were necessary. Without "the test of the grave" there could be no redemption. Poland had to endure a political holocaust in order to be redeemed together with all mankind.

To be sure, there was much in this soaring national messianism which was flattering to the Polish nationalistic ego—and, one may say in passing, such flattery is not an exclusively Polish failing, as is amply documented by Waclaw Lednicki in his book *Life and Culture of Poland*,[8]—but the doctrine itself represented in its purpose and in its effect an idealism which ought not to be ridiculed or abused. It was far more than a salve to Polish nationalistic pride; it was also a spur to Polish patriotism and kept alive the insurrectionary tradition initiated by Kociuszko. Polish romantic poetry was responsible for the Polish political romanticism which manifested itself in the insurrections of 1830, 1848, and 1863.

After the failure of this third and final insurrection, political

[8] Op. cit. pp. 16-17.

romanticism gave place to a more sober politico-evolutionary philosophy of "organic work at the bases of society" known in Poland as *positivism,* and poetry gave place to the novel in Polish literature. But the major chord continued to vibrate. The primary concern of the novelists, as of the poets who had preceded them, was to serve the nation, to write novels which would be not only a mirror of Polish national life but also a spur and guide to its moral and social uplift. If we confine ourselves to only the three greatest novelists of the nineteenth century, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Henryk Sienkiewicz and Boleslaw Prus, we distinctly hear as the century nears its end another crescendo of the major chord. Orzeszkowa began her career by turning her back on romanticism and devoting herself to concrete, practical, social themes—poverty in the Polish countryside, emancipation of women, the problem of Polish Jewry, education for practical life, and other slogans of the new Polish positivistic school. Indeed, she won her international fame by her novels on feministic themes like *Martha, Mr. Graba, In a Cage,* and others, but in her greatest novel, *Niemen Country,* written in 1887, it is no longer a social program but the grave of an insurrectionist of 1863 killed in action which is the leit-motif of her rich and splendid landscape of the Polish Northeast. With this novel, Orzeszkowa ceased to be only a sociologist practising literature in order to point out to her nation some morally acceptable way of life compatible with the existing political order. She became a Polish woman patriot fighting with the sharpest weapon she had—her pen—to save the soul of her country from being blighted by the materialistic slogans which by that time were being perverted to expedient, selfish, and ignoble ends. The moral welfare of the nation was at stake.

Henryk Sienkiewicz, too, started out as a calm and cool positivist critical of the faults of Polish society, but by 1884, he was already writing his incomparable trilogy of historical novels set in the seventeenth century. That century, as we know, was the

period of Poland's moral decline, of the anarchical license of the Polish *szlachta,* disruptions of the Diet by the *liberum veto,* treacheries like Krzysztof Opalinski's, insubordination, etc. Yet Sienkiewicz pointed out that although the faults of the Poles at that time may have been at their worst, they had at least two capital virtues. They had succeeded in throwing the marauding Cossacks and Swedes out of the country; and the turning point in the struggle was their successful defense with the help of God of the Polish shrine at Częstochowa. The implication to Polish society was, of course, to take heart—which it did, in religious faith and political hope.

Boleslaw Prus never flattered the Polish nationalistic ego, yet his love of country was perhaps even deeper than Sienkiewicz's or Orzeszkowa's. When he was once charged in criticism that the social activity of his heroes was not idealistic on a grand scale and was too meager in results, his answer was characteristic: "And what else do you do, you present-day heroes? Be different, become better, and then I shall describe you a tone higher." Obviously, he had in mind a moral tone.

For those who appreciate artistic economy and depth in the grasp of an elemental conflict, the major chord in Polish literature never rang out with a clearer, higher tone than in Prus's novel, *The Outpost.* Its theme is the same as in the much more widely read historical novel, *Knights of the Cross,* by Sienkiewicz: two peoples, two cultures, the Polish and the German, are locked in conflict. Unlike in *The Knights of the Cross,* the odds are overwhelmingly against the Polish cause in Prus's novel, but in which of these masterpieces is the struggle more fierce? Which story is more prophetic of the future? The *Knights of the Cross* closes with the Polish triumph over the Teutonic Order at the battle of Grunwald in 1410, with the names of famous Polish heroes ringing in our ears. *The Outpost* closes on the picture of a modern peasant nonentity named Slimak holding tenaciously to his small plot of land. Slimak may be limited in mental out-

look, he may be suspicious of his intellectual and social superiors, but he blindly loves his land and trusts his God. His peasant instinct tells him that this land which he was born on is his own, and that the land he will die on must be no other. He simply will not be bribed, nor tricked, nor frightened, nor beaten away from it. He remains on his land—victorious in his single-handed fight against the economic and political might of the German Empire. Truly, the simplicity of this story is more than epic. It is prophetic. It leaps across the whole first half of the twentieth century, across the brilliant rich literature of Poland between the two world wars, into the situation of the Polish people today. Once more, the Polish people are locked in an elemental conflict with a powerful enemy, and again the odds are overwhelmingly against them. Literature, too, is involved.

Before taking up this latest problem confronting Polish literature, however, a few words are necessary about the literature between the two world wars. When the miracle of Polish independence became fact in 1918, Polish authors looked out over the ruins of three empires upon a reunited and politically free Poland. They joyfully accepted and greeted the new political freedom. Within that freedom, progress toward social and moral justice in Polish society ceased to be a means to eventual political freedom and became a goal in and for itself. Political freedom, in turn, by the sheer fact of its attainment was now regarded as a moral and political victory which had at last been won after a century and a half of effort. Mickiewicz, Slowacki, Krasinski, Orzeszkowa, Sienkiewicz and Prus were at last vindicated.

It was now felt that Polish authors could drop the burden of patriotic concern for purely Polish problems and strike out on broad universal themes, yet, characteristically, the major patriotic chord vibrated with undiminished intensity up to the very outbreak of war in 1939.

Perhaps no one stated the didactic function of literature in free Poland more clearly, or practised it more passionately, than

Stefan Zeromski, the spiritual leader of the generation carrying over from before the first world war. It was he more than anyone else who set the civic and moral tone of Polish literature in the 1920's and 1930's:

> Poland must work out and will work out a higher and more perfect ideal of social life than communist Russia, and must create a higher material civilization than efficient Germany, for only in that way can it ensure its national independence forever.[9]

If it should seem from this quotation that the major chord in Polish literature had somehow slipped into a minor key, it should also be remembered that Zeromski regarded it his moral duty "to rip open the wounds of Poland lest they heal over with scabs of baseness."[10] The sombre moral beauty of such a purpose transcends nationalistic problems. Obviously, it hurls an author and his heroes into a struggle of the individual against society and at the same time into a universal spiritual struggle within that individual against human frailty. Seen in this light, the dogma of patriotism which the best Polish literature remained faithful to between the wars, was truly the same noble political gospel as of old.

Today, after the second world war, the same literary tradition still continues on its own momentum, but it is already becoming clear that there are ideological objections to its continuation. Furthermore, these objections are administratively enforceable. Different value judgments are being imposed by new literary pontiffs in line with a political gospel whose morality has nothing to do with the Christian ethic of the old Polish tradition about individual and collective behavior. The dramas of Mickiewicz and Slowacki, for example, require ideological reinterpretation before they are deemed fit for presentation on the stage.[11]

[9] Stefan Zeromski, "Preface to *Nullo and his Companions*" (a book by K. Firlej-Bielanska) in *Elegie* (Warsaw, 1928), a post humous collection of previously unpublished works by Zeromski, edited by Waclaw Borowy, p. 178.

[10] Stefan Zeromski, *Sulkowski* (Warsaw: J. Mortkowicz, 1927) p. 136.

In the long programmatic article, "Some Problems of Contemporary Dramaturgy," in the literary weekly, *Odrodzenie* for June 26, 1949, the literary theoretician, Wlodzimierz Sokorski, discusses the new value judgments as follows:

> The decisive factor in assessing the value of the work of a truly creative artist is the author's ability to discover the essence of the present epoch's new conflicts, as well as assume the proper attitude and the proper proportion in observing the events and conflicts of the present epoch.

What this means is simply that the proper attitude for an author to assume toward present-day reality in Poland is that which the present Government assumes, that the proper perspective in which to view it is the Communist Party line, and that the value of the author's art will be judged accordingly.

Whether the "dogma of patriotism" enjoining love of country and love of God, which has endured through 500 years of Polish cultural history as the major chord in the literature, will change this regimen or itself be changed by it, remains to be seen. It does matter greatly to Poland, and it should matter to the whole Western world whether Poland's noble political gospel which was developed on a Western theocentric concept of life, will prevail or fall. The very core of a great Christian national culture is under attack, and there is more at stake than literature alone.

[11] Wlodzimierz Sokorski, "Some Problems of Contemporary Dramaturgy," *Odrodzenie*, (Warsaw, June 26, 1949) p. 1.

Outline of Romanian Literature

After such a wonderful introduction, I feel very shy about standing up and speaking to you, especially since I know that in this hall have stood so many professors and doctors who were masters of the subjects they talked about. Because I am moved by your wish to know more about my country, I am happy to tell you, as best I can, about how thought developed in my land, and how it came to be written down, and how those songs of my country live deep within me. I will try to pass onto you something of their echo, something of the pictures they evoke in me.

To understand our literature I think we have to know, first of all, something about Romania's history, and who the Romanians are.

Have you noticed that our name is Romania? Why do we call ourselves Romanians? Well, I will tell you a little short story about this which will explain much better than any history book possibly can. One day, I went out on an excursion with my father and my mother into the mountains, into the northwest Carpathians. My father was showing us the boundaries of three of our provinces, which, until his reign, had never been joined together; and we were standing there, when a shepherd walked over the hills and greeted us. My father said to him: "From where are you?" He wanted to know, was he from Transylvania, Moldavia, or Bucovina. The old man said: "I am a Roman from Rome." Yes, that is what we call ourselves—Romans from Rome. And here was this old man in the mountains with his sheep—I doubt whether he knew how to read or write—but he had no doubt at all as to his worth or where he sprang from. He gave this answer which is our pride: none of us consider ourselves

from this or that province; we are just Romanians. And why so? Because in that part of the world, before the Romans came, there lived the Dacians. They were conquered in the year 102 by the Romans, and their land was a Roman colony for over one hundred years. When the Roman Empire broke up, nobody knows exactly what happened to those people except that they must have remained there, because in the 14th century a little country began to develop by the name of Vallachia and its people spoke a Latin language although everybody else around them were Slavs or Magyars. They are supposed to be the descendants of the Roman conquerors and colonists. Fifty-nine years later, Moldavia appeared also with the same language. The third principality, Transylvania, also used this language, although it was part of Hungary for over seven hundred years.

What happened between the breaking up of the Roman Empire and the time when the three principalities appeared, around 1335, nobody knows exactly. Historians have delved deep into the question but nobody has been able to give an absolutely historical answer. But this fact remains: they are today as they were then—Romanians.

It was not until very much later—not until the 17th century actually that a book was published in the Romanian language, and, interestingly enough, this was published in Sibiu in Transylvania in spite of the fact that Transylvania was under the dominion of the Hungarians. The book was the Psalms. This brings us to another point of great importance in the country and its history—and that is, that its people always were Christians. If they were Christians before the Roman occupation, or if they became Christians during the Roman occupation, that again is something which is not known. But Christians they were—long before any of the other peoples around them accepted that faith. They belong to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Being isolated from the Latin world the church was greatly influenced by Slavonic and Greek culture. The Romanian lan-

guage has a certain softness about it because of the Slavonic influence. I could say that the skeleton, the construction, of the language is Latin. In fact, of all romance tongues it is the most Latin of living languages. Latin constitutes its framework, and Slavonic adorns and decorates it.

So the first book to be published in Romanian was part of the Bible. Because this was the first thing ever to be published in Romanian and since I have been asked to read a few things to you in Romanian, my own language, I have chosen to read you a few sentences out of the twenty-third Psalm because I think that is the one you all know, and therefore you will not need a translation. I feel, in reading those words "Even though I pass through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for Thou art with me," that it is a prayer still appropriate today for those behind the Iron Curtain who are passing "through the valley of the shadow of death."

About the same time, or very shortly after the Psalms were printed (1541), the New Testament was published (1561). The next book to come into the Romanian language was Metropolitan Varlam of Transylvania's answer to the Calvanistic catechism in 1648 which explained the Orthodox point of view. In 1688 Prince Serban Cantacuzino of Vallachia published the complete Bible.

Of great importance was the translation of the Liturgy from Slavonic into Romanian by Metropolitan Dositheus, which, although printed in 1679, came into use generally only in the 18th century.

With the start of the 18th century, the Slavonic influence under which the church and the country, in general, had been, began to die out, and Romania passed under a strong Greek influence. From the beginning of the 16th century until 1877, Vallachia and Moldavia had been under Turkish suzerainty, which often delegated the ruling powers to persons of Greek origin from Constantinople, known as Fanariots. At the same

time, however, in both principalities the leading minds began to be interested in their own history; they became much more conscious of themselves as a Romanian entity.

Grigore Urechie, Miron Costin, Constantin Cantacuzino, Dimitri Cantemir, and Ioan Neculce wrote the first Chronicles and so made a basis to the recorded early Romanian history. The most important of these historians was Urechie (middle of the 16th century), who was the oldest of them, and Cantemir (1675-1723), an extremely cultured man who had travelled much abroad and who, besides compiling national history, brought the Romanians into contact with other outside countries, of which until then they had had but little knowledge.

The 18th century was a time of awakening in Romania. We came to a fuller knowledge of our Latin origin and discovered that we had Latin sisters in Italy and France. These two countries also began to take interest in the distant little country which had the same origin as they. Our poets who travelled extensively abroad at this time made many contacts, both in France and in Italy, and were greatly influenced by the romantics of those days, especially by Gaerstner, LaMartine, and Byron. I believe that Byron's influence was especially great because of his love of liberty. It is natural that the style they brought back was romantic. It was unrealistic and foreign, yet it awoke dreams, new ideas, nationalistic ideals of independence and justice. Perhaps it was a little bit of Utopia, but it gave the needed impetus to the new nationalistic thinking through the works of Grigore Asaki, who lived from 1788 to 1869. Then came Ioan Vacarescu (1792-1863), Ion Elaide Radulescu (1802-1872), George Alexandrescu, and Vasile Carlova. All these men had studied the European classics, which they also began to translate and which greatly influenced their style. They opened the door to "Young Romania."

After the revolution of 1848, which was a great moment of national awakening all over Europe, the Romanians, too, began

standing up for their national independence, and as a consequence many of their leaders were exiled by the Turks and the Hungarians. I came, lately, across a very interesting little book published in England in 1853. It is a collection of Romanian legends translated into English. Not so much do the legends interest me as does the date of the publication, and also what the author says in his preface. He defends the refugee—the Romanian refugee especially—and shows how unfair it is that he cannot find work anywhere in the free world; that people who are patriots are condemned because they believe in national independence to live unproductive lives in foreign countries. The similarity of the situation, then and today, struck me very much.

The best representatives of the years 1848 to 1866 were the Bratanu brothers, and Rosetti and Cogalniceanu. These men were also great politicians. It was natural that this should be so —that the men who could write and use their pens in defense of their country should play important political parts and be great national leaders. These were the men who created modern Romania to which we ourselves belong. In 1866 they founded the Romanian Academy. This happened to coincide with the bringing in of a new dynasty and the turning over of an entirely new page of history.

In 1859, Moldavia and Vallachia, in spite of strong Turkish opposition, were united under Alexander Ioan Cuza. The Romanians realized that there were too many factions among the leading Fanariots and local ex-reigning families to guarantee internal peace. They chose therefore a foreign prince to rule over them who would have no personal axe to grind. Cuza abdicated in favor of Prince Carol of Hohenzollern, who came to the United Principalities of Romania in 1866, and in the battle of Plevna in 1877 gave Romania her independence from the Turks, and became King Carol I of Romania in 1881.

The most important writer and poet of that time was Vasile

Alexandri (1821-1890). Upon him we will dwell a little because he was the first of the writers to turn away from the classics and the foreign influence and to search for inspiration in what his own country could give him. He was the first to collect and publish the ballads and songs of Romania—the songs that we call *doina.* English has no word into which *doina* may be translated, but for us Romanians it fills a great need, for it means joy and sorrow and beauty all together. In the *doina* we see the beautiful landscapes. In Romania nobody lives very far from the soil. However poor or wealthy a man may be, his greatest treasure is the Romanian soil. Each one of us loves the soil upon which he was born. And Romania is indeed a very beautiful country. There are high mountains; there are great plains; there are the hills; there is the sea, the turbulent rivers, the great forests; and everywhere, there are masses of flowers and the little whitewashed cottages under heavy roofs. There are the peasant girls with their beautiful costumes. There is the sheperd, who is our special poet and the man who makes songs. There are the gypsies with their violins. All this you will find in the *doina,* and always, as is so characteristic of the Romanian, he will address himself to nature. He starts his song speaking of the little flower, the green leaf, the blade of grass, the corn. To them he sings of his joys and sorrows, his love and his hope.

Of all these many beautiful ballads which Alexandri collected, perhaps the most characteristic is "Mioritza." "Mioritza" tells of more than a legend; it has in it the whole tragedy of the country. It tells of a shepherd boy who speaks to his sheep, especially to one little lamb, and he asks it: "Why are you crying?" It starts out something like this: "Lamb, little lamb, it has been three days and your voice has not stopped crying." When he asks it why it weeps the lamb tells him that it knows that all the other shepherds plan to kill the little shepherd boy, and it begs the boy to run away. The little boy says: "No I will not run

away," and faces his misfortunes, telling the little lamb that it must go and explain to his mother what has happened to him, describing his death as if it had been a wedding. This ballad reflects in quaint verse much of the Romanian feeling for tragedy, for she always has suffered at the hands of her stronger and envious neighbors.

Romanian literature reaches its high point in the writings of Eminescu (1847-1855). This young man was truly inspired. Intelligent, with wide horizons, he travelled abroad, went to France, Germany, and Italy, studied the classics, and returned to study his own country so that we find in his writings an exceptional variation of composition—poems, descriptions, and philosophy. He was a strange being in many ways. Although he studied in many universities he never received a degree. He was interested in what he studied, not in what he achieved. So he was always poor, always in difficulties, and unfortunately his mind eventually gave way under his many troubles. He ended in an asylum at the age of thirty-six, where he died three years later, clubbed on the head by one of the inmates. And so came to an end the life of a man who, had he lived, might have given us even greater writings.

Even so, this man's works are perfect marvels. For a man so young, he had deep philosophy. He suffered because of social injustice, and revolted against it; he adored his country; he delved into its history; and he described Romania in the same way perhaps that Grigorescu, the great painter, painted its landscapes. He wrote so much that it is hard to choose which of his poems to read to you. It is difficult because the variety of his writings being so great, one can hardly say "this is characteristic of him" of any one piece. So I thought that I would read a description which is at least characteristically Romanian. It comes from a poem called "Calin"—an old legend in which he describes a small Romanian hut:

MIHAIL EMINESCU

Translated by Sylvia Pankhurst and I. O. Stefanovici

From "Calin"

To the little hut he entered. At the bench-end, faint and clouded,
On a broken pot an oil-light loomed, amid the darkness shrouded.
On the grey hearth two cakes baking, in the ashes' heated cover;
One old slipper 'neath a rafter and behind the door the other;
In the basket there, was lying the old grind-mill, worn and dented;
And the Tom-cat by the chimney washed his ear and purred contented.
Smoke begrimed the saint's old picture and the comanac* he weareth,
On the shelf beneath the icon, dried and dusty, mint and basil
Fill with pungent, strong aroma all the darkness of the hovel;
On the oven, clay-besmeared, on the rough walls, smoked and yellow,
With a twig of charcoal, pictured by that clever little fellow,
Tails like corkscrews, sticks for trotters, runs a row of little piggies
In the manner best becoming to all virtuous piggie-wiggies
O'er the meagre, unglazed window, a pig's bladder had been stretched
And but feeble rays there passing, cast a glimmer, drab and wretched . . .

The author remains for us the greatest of our poets, because he inspired all who came after him. Today they have tried to purge him out of Romanian literature. They have not entirely succeeded. He has been brought back and has been reinstated as a forerunner of communism because of his Socialistic ideas; but those poems dealing with his hatred of foreigners and foreign occupation are now no more printed.

At the same time that Eminescu opened the gates of poetry and fancy we had a great teacher, Maiorescu, who brought law and order into the Romanian literature. He made a norm. He instituted the first literary discussion which was published by the Junimea, a literary organization, under the title *Convorbiri Literari* ("literary talks"). He organized lectures and discussion groups in the principalities. He was greatly assisted by Alexandru

*The headgear worn by the Orthodox priests of the Eastern Church.

Xenopol, a historian, who published the first consistent and well-founded Romanian history (1847-1920).

Then came the delightful Creanga who, peasant himself, collected from his village and from all around the country all the fairy tales. He was the delight of my childhood and that of many other Romanian children. His stories are full of lost princesses, of faithful princes, of wonderful horses, of dragons, and the wonderful fairies who lend a princess, for instance, a hairbrush which, when she throws it down upon the ground becomes a great forest that comes between her and the wicked dragon who is following her. In all of these tales the good always overcomes the evil. There are lots and lots of such very exciting and enchanting legends—for instance, about the Haiduc, who is our Robin Hood, and who plays a most romantic and exciting part in our storybooks. Many times I remember, as a child, going through our forest and imagining the Haiduc coming on his great black charger to the rescue of some maiden in distress.

Cosbuc (1866-1918) wrote stories about country life. He was a man who adored his little village, and although he came to town and stayed there, he was always full of longing for his own village and wrote the most enchanting descriptions of the life of the Romanian peasant.

I should like to make a little explanation here because I have found that people have not understood my use of the word "peasant." In Europe, it has not the same meaning as it has for you, and I would like to say this: If that upon which a country is built—if that foundation is the lowest—then the Romanian peasant is the lowest. If that element which has preserved the language, faith, courage, nationality, tradition, all that which is great in the land, is the noblest—then the peasant is the noblest. It is on him that we all count; he is the backbone of our country; he is our pride and joy!

Also we have an aristocracy which has been very patriotic. An important part of our Romanian development was when, after

World War I my father decided, with his government, to divide the land up amongst the people—among those who toiled and worked it. He found no opposition from the great landowners, although it meant that their big estates were to be taken from them. Enthusiastically they went with him into it, and together with him they divided up the land among the peasants. From this came the truest and the most significant title my father ever had, that of: "King of the Peasants." So when I talk about the peasants, you will understand that I speak of those whom I love most.

I will now come to someone else of whom, of course, you have all heard, and doubtless have all known—surely you have read many of his books—and that is Professor Iorga. Nicolae Iorga was one of the most versatile men, I think, that my country has ever produced; he was chiefly a great historian. He wrote an enormous number of books. Harvard University has over forty volumes of his work. He was interested in politics, especially, I think, from the historical point of view. He was well-versed also in art and architecture, not only those of Romania but of the entire Byzantine world. He will remain one of the greatest authorities on this subject. He had also, one of the most amusing and interesting personalities; he was enchanting to listen to. I have been to many of his lectures; I have gone around the country with him; and I can say that most of what I know, I know from him. I think no one could make a class more enchanting and interesting, amusing and full of life, or bring the past so vividly to our minds as Professor Iorga. I will admit that I find his books heavy and tedious in parts; I think that those of you who have read them will agree with me about that, but his name will forever be one of the greatest in Romanian literature and history.

Quite of a different type is our great playwright, Ion Caraghiale (1852-1912). He was an actor to begin with, and then he began to write his own plays. He was a satirist—the naughty boy

of Romanian literature. He made fun of everybody and everything. He laughed at the new society; he ridiculed the small provincial towns; he poked fun at everybody. And yet his plays are to such a degree amusing, they were written with such humor and art that everyone forgave him and he remains our greatest humorist and playwright. Because he poked fun especially at the bourgeois class he is admitted by the Communist regime, but I often think he must be turning in his grave now to see how his words are being misused, and I think that if he were alive today the plays he would write would be equally funny but at the expense of quite a different social class. When I think of the bombastic way in which the new order of things speaks, I wish that Caraghiale was able to put it all into a play. He certainly managed to do so tremendously well with the people and society of his own time, and even to this day his plays have the same amusement which they had then—something which I think will never go out of date.

Quite different was our great historical novelist who wrote in the way of Sir Walter Scott—Delavrancea (1858-1918). His plays and stories were especially concerned with history—the romance of history, romance in which the historical facts perhaps were not always exactly correct but which certainly portray the atmosphere of the times in the most vivid and colorful and pure language.

Then comes Bratescu Voinesti who wrote lovely stories of the peasant folk. His stories are often tragic. Also, he was a great student of nature. One of his loveliest, bizarre stories is called *Nicolaitza Minciuna* ("Nicholas, the Little Liar"). It is the story of a peasant boy who notices that his cat can make sounds like a bird, so as to catch them. He tells that to everybody about him but nobody believes him. He especially wants to impress the girl he loves, and there is a wonderful scene when he brings her to listen to his cat making these strange sounds. The sun comes out, and the cat stretches out in its warmth and goes

to sleep; his girl laughs at him. Finally, the boy hangs himself. It is the atmosphere of the story that has a special charm.

We are now coming into our own century—from the year 1900 on. We have Vlahutza (1858-1919), who was a great missionary poet. He writes of the life of the church, the life of faith. Also, in a different way, one of our greatest missionary poets was Nikifor Crainic, who started in a seminary. He never became a priest, but was a theologian. In his poetry he tried to bring out all the beauty and all the depth of the Orthodox Church. He was a man of peace. He wanted to bring good understanding amongst the people of Romania, of all the different cultures—Hungarian, German, Bulgarian, etc.; he tried to bring to them better understanding of each other's cultures, thus better to appreciate each other's positions in the country.

He was not pro-Russian, and therefore immediately after the entry of the Communists he was hunted down and had to hide for a long time. I remember my great astonishment when I went to the place where he was living in hiding. I had known him before, and it was very tragic to see this man in hiding. But finally he could not bear it; he said it was against the principles to live in this way, so he appeared again in the open. He promptly disappeared. Nobody knows what happened to him since he was caught. What was the end of Crainic, in what way he met his Master, we will never know, but we know he went serving Him.

One of our greatest poets of today is Lucian Blaga. He is a poet of cosmic mystery. He, also, was very impressed by our legends, and he had a great love and understanding for the deeper side of our thinking. His poems reflect the positive part of Romanian philosophy. He was a man who tried to make it alive and understandable to every man, to make it a real entity in his life.

There are many of whom I would like to speak, but it is impossible to mention them all. I will talk of a man like Bucutza, for instance, who was one of our best novelists. He died in great

misery shortly after the war. Then there is another of our poets, Goga—dear to all Transylvanian hearts. He was the great poet of Transylvania; also he was one of our greatest nationalists who fought for the union of all Romania.

Another who must be mentioned is Theodor Arghesi. He is the poet of contrast of whom it can well be said that from the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step. Sublime or obscene, his work always remains great poetry. We believe him to be in a Communist prison camp, today.

There were movements, for instance, like the one for an ethnological museum at the head of which was Professor Mehedintz, who was also a very good writer. Then we had Professor Sextil Pushcariu, who was compiling a great dictionary and Romanian linguistic atlas. He was still working at it during the war. It was an interesting project and one of very great importance, this listing of all Romanian words, going into their construction and grammar and origin as never had been done before. Because he was a very ardent nationalist, he was immediately considered a danger under the Communist regime. He happened to live in the same village that I did; therefore, I was there and saw his sad end. He had a stroke; the Communists came continually to arrest him, but we managed to save him two or three times because he was so ill. I well remember once being called and told that the police had just come again to arrest him. I rushed in. We knew that he had high blood pressure, so we immediately cut a vein and began to let blood run. I made as much a mess of it as I could to impress the policemen who came. Of course when they saw both of us covered with blood they departed. He finally died in his own home.

You see, Romania had her entire unity—the Greater Romania such as we have it now on a map—only from the end of World War I until 1944. Twenty-five years they had of independence; twenty-five years in which to build everything up, and so much had to be done. We cannot speak of Romanian

literature and culture without saying that all education in Romania was free, from the kindergarten right through the universities. There were 30,000 students in our universities; 6,000 graduated yearly; 15,000 had scholarships which consisted of food and lodging, and about 30,000 high school children were treated in the same way. So that in Romania culture was spreading extremely fast. Because of this, and because our people are very poetical and very imaginative, we had a great amount of writers and poets. I cannot enumerate them all; there simply are too many of them. But it seems as if there was an extraordinary amount of writers and poets who developed suddenly from the middle of the 18th century to our day. It isn't that the potential wasn't there before—it was there always—but the freedom was not there nor the possibility to expand. They could not develop as western Europe had done, because for such a long time they had been under the oppression of the Turks, Russians, Austro-Hungarians, and Poles. For hundreds of years they were under the influence of the oppression of some country or other. It is a short span of liberty, twenty-five years, in the life of a nation which goes back 2,000 years, but we did our best with the time we had.

Another of our great writers was Sadoveanu, who wrote beautiful novels and enchanting short stories. It is a sad thing for us all to know that this man, of whom we were so proud, today has gone over to the enemy. But he is an exception—so many of the others did not.

Among the more popular novelists—the best seller men of Romania—I must mention Ionel Teodoreanu. One of his first books was called *Medeleni,* which gave him his first start and was a best seller from the very beginning. It deals with the life of a family on a large estate in Romania, their lives, their hopes and loves, and hatreds, and little flirtations. It is a most enchanting book, giving a vivid picture of country life in Romania in the beginning of the century. In other books he takes his horses

into the towns, and there you have the usual conflict between cities and rural communities—the old ideas versus the new. His books had the greatest success until the time of the Communist regime. Here I would like to mention a little personal incident which, I think, gives one an idea of his personality.

Both he and his wife were novelists, and I went to see them one day because his father was very ill and I was able to bring him some medicine. I remember coming into the house of a man who had been a very successful man, and there he sat in a little room with all his family huddled around one fireplace, which had a very small fire in it, all of them dressed in their outdoor winter clothes. They remained very cheerful in spite of all their difficulties, and I know that hunger often was at their door. But they were busily writing away at their books. They gratefully accepted the medicine, and then I left them. When these books were published, in spite of all the difficulties put in their way, each one of them sent me a copy, but instead of writing a dedication on the first page as one would expect, Teodoreanu wrote on the page on which he had been working at the moment at which I had entered their house, and he said: "Here you stopped me, interrupted me, and inspired me anew." I think that that is one of the nicest things that he could have done. Alas, the book was amongst the things which I was not allowed to bring away with me when the Communists obliged me to leave my home.

I think I should now talk to you a little bit about the writers in exile, for some of them have managed to escape from behind the Iron Curtain. They are in France, in England, and some of them are over here. Perhaps the most important of these is Mircea Elaide. He is a man of very wide culture who has travelled much to India, where he has made a detailed study of Yogi, and to all the other countries of the Far East. He has studied the West as well. His philosophy is all-comprehensive; he is today one of the most active authors. He writes for many news-

papers and reviews; he is a great nationalist and his style is excellent.

Another one of our great poets is Aron Cutrus, a man of fine national feeling and also an energetic fighter for the underdog. His writings are occasionally published in Spain.

Then there is Grigore Gafencu, a diplomat who was ambassador to Moscow before the war, so that he has really a first-hand knowledge of the situation and his books are very well documented. They are called, *Preliminaries of the War in the East* and *The Last Days of Europe.*

Virgil Gheorgiu is a newcomer in our literary world. His book, *The Twenty-Fifth Hour,* which in Europe had a very great success, has been translated and is published here where, however, it had less popularity. It is called *The Twenty-Fifth Hour* because in it everything is always too late. It is the story of many unfortunates in Europe, always switching from one side to another, always on the wrong side no matter what happens, whatever party is in power; always being put back into jail or concentration camp for not having been what they should have been. It is a tragic and interesting document of our times.

Then we have Ventila Horia, a journalist and poet who has made an anthology of Romanian poets in exile. It is a very excellent book. In ruffling through its pages I came across this poignant bit: "D.P. two letters on a scrap of paper. Thousands of lives in a monogram." These few words so clearly express what so many feel—the despair of belonging nowhere, of being no one. But the other poets collected in this book mostly describe their longings. One man speaks to his mother; another remembers his wife. All the poems are addressed to those who have been left behind.

There are other poets who have remained behind the Iron Curtain. In some way their poems, a few of them, have reached us. What their activity exactly is we do not know, and the examples of their work which have been smuggled out to us do

not say. I do not know the names of the authors and even if I did, I certainly would be unable to divulge them today, for it would cost them their lives. Nor do I know how the poems were smuggled out. But the interesting fact is that we have the poems here to study. They are quite extraordinarily beautiful because they express, not the thoughts of the free people, nor the thoughts of those who have escaped; they are the voice of the oppressed people. You will see in these poems all there is of hatred and hope, despair and courage, and at the same time all the faith and resistance of our people.

As I told you the church has always played a great part for the Romanians. If it had not been for the Orthodox Church, perhaps our language would never have been preserved for us the way it was; however, in all churches all over Romania no matter how much separated and isolated by foreign occupation, exactly the same language was read each day at the service. Immeasurable is the gratitude that we should have towards our church for its tremendous faith, for the strength it has given us, and also for maintaining the language unchanged for us, as a people and as a nation. This role of guardian the church continues to play today behind the Iron Curtain.

I am going to read you three of these poems which have been smuggled out. I don't think that I need to explain much more except to tell you that our literature is being perverted; that one may not publish anything which is not approved by the party. Not only are textbooks forbidden to be lithographed without the permission of the party, but not even maps may be printed which do not, in some way, express the party line. The poems and telegrams which we read in the newspapers and magazines addressed in official admiration to our friends, our liberating brothers, the Russians, and especially to our dear father Stalin who has brought us all wonders, and all beauties, and all freedom, and all good things, display a stupidity of style, an abuse of language and a lack of harmony in phraseology

which is really astonishing. One can only say that this is not the language which we learned to speak as children and still love.

Well, now we discover that in spite of all these perversions of our language and style and thought which writers are officially obliged to make use of, the old spirit is still there. The old rhythm is there and the form of the old, old ballads. They still write of pain and joy, hate and faith. These poems, I have, to the best of my ability, translated myself. They are not put in rhyme as they originally were. I have no gift whatsoever for poetry, but I have tried to keep in my translation the rhythm as well as the spirit of the originals.

The first is titled, "Birthday Wishes." The poet is wondering what he can give Stalin for his birthday. A once beautiful and plentiful country has been reduced to misery and poverty; 75 per cent produce goes to Russia; children are torn from their mothers and sent to the U.S.S.R. In this poem we hear the cry of the desperate people, voicing their woes and misery and revolt and hatred of their oppressors with an intensity which is startling. The Romanians are by nature a gentle, kindly people, long-suffering and patient, a people used to much occupation by foreign armies, accustomed to bend their heads but never to give in. They, who after seven hundred years of Magyar oppression and three hundred years of Turkish sovereignty kept their language, their national dress, costumes, and faith, are faced today as never before in their history with an extermination of all things held dear for centuries.

BIRTHDAY WISHES

For your birthday
I know not what
To bring you as a gift.
Bruised upon my bones
My skin alone do I have.
Since I have pulled in harness,
Since I have sighed in the yoke,

All that was plentious
Has melted away as snow.
The owls hoot,
The darkness deepens;
The nails upon my hands
Grow long for retribution . . .

Grow you, too,
My timid voice;
Grow as a djinn,
Grow as a great bird;
Gather in your flight
And bring to the oppressor
The cryings of orphans,
The suffocating voice of mothers
Drowned in tears,
To the mourning of the homeless.

Hate of the whole country
Rise up now!
Muster your curses,
Doom this day!
Curse it with fire and brimstone
For the savage beast
That it bore,
Over the horizon to rise
And with his horns
The world to overthrow.

O my little voice
Grow strong, little by little
As spring grows
In volume increasing,
As down the mountainside it falls.

Become a club upon his brow
Bludgeon the beast!
O my voice grow! From the forest swell,
Out of the felled woods,
Out of the deserted villages,
Grow out of the golden grain

That is taken over foreign roads,
Grow out of the ruins
Sound from the depth of prison dungeons
There where rotting in chains
All that still stands firm in the land
Is about to die . . .

* * * * * *

The last two poems, written in a prison cell, present a different picture—that of a sufferer resigned to his fate, to injustice and torture, who seeks no redress in hatred, does not revolt or curse. We have here a poet of great quality and spiritual strength, who, lost in a world of pain, seemingly without redress in his lifetime, still denotes the beautiful tender spirit of the Romanian people. In "Days" is found all the loneliness, the isolation of a man behind bars of iron who has still kept the integrity of his soul—who can tell through what hunger and torture?

DAYS

Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Monday
Neutral days without form,
Like a great fog
Over the landscape

I stand in Time terribly naked
With my soles planted in liquid eternity,
Like an atoll in an ocean
Beaten by torrid winds. . . .

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday—what day is it?
The week is dead amassment;
My months pass through no calendar
My island is on no map.

Monday, Wednesday, Friday—the devil take you!
Stinking days—stagnant days!
Here in the jaws of eternity
Who shall count your dark hundreds?

"Jesus in the Night" was written by a man who in his agony had a vision, the authenticity of which we dare not doubt. He realizes that his pain was shared once by Another and he knows that he is part of the body of Christ, and the community of saints. Through pain they have become for him, reality. This man does not cling to the faith, but is one with it. Thus, transcending all time, here speaks the soul of a country that for hundreds of years has suffered and yet has resisted, because it has understood the meaning of pain.

JESUS IN THE NIGHT

This night Jesus entered my cell.
O how sad, how tall was Christ!
The moon entered after him in my cell
And made him still taller and sadder.

He sat by me on my mat;
"Put your hands upon my wounds."
On his ankles there were marks of sores and rust,
As if he had worn chains once. . . .

His hands were like lilies upon a grave,
His eyes as deep as forests;
The moon whitened his garments,
Silvering in his hands old scars.

Sighing he stretched his weary bones
Upon my verminous mat;
In his sleep he shone, but the heavy bars
Lengthened upon his whiteness as rods.

I rose from beneath my gray blanket.
"Lord, from whence come you?
Out of which eternity?"
Jesus put his finger to his lip
And signed me to be still.

My cell seemed like a mountain's peak;
The roaches and rats swarmed around;
I felt my head fall heavy upon my hand
And I slept, a thousand years. . . .

When I awoke from my heavy trance
The straw smelt like roses;
I was in my cell and there was moonlight
But Jesus was nowhere.

"Where are you, Lord?" I cried between the bars
Across the moon came drifts of mist. . . .
I clasped my hands, and found upon my palms
The mark of his nails.

MICHAEL KARPOVICH

Tolstoy and Dostoevsky Two Spokesmen for Russia

In 1840, in that chapter of his *Heroes and Hero Worship* which dealt with a poet as a hero, Thomas Carlyle found it possible to assert that Russia, all her external might to the contrary, still was "mute" in so far as in her history she had had no poet expressing the spirit of her people. Made three years after the death of Pushkin, this assertion shows in a striking fashion to what extent modern Russian literature was unknown to the Western world in the mid-nineteenth century. One should not be surprised at this lack of knowledge if one remembers that at that time modern Russian literature still was in its youth. It did not come of age until the early part of the nineteenth century when, for the first time, an organic synthesis was achieved between the old national tradition and the ideas and forms recently borrowed from the West.

But once this synthesis had been achieved, the creative power of Russian literature began to unfold with amazing rapidity. Its greatest names all belong to the same historical period. Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, Tiutchev, Goncharov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky—all were born within some thirty years of each other. To this day, what they have produced remains the highest achievement of Russian literature—perhaps, one should say, of Russian national culture in general.

Certainly, the literature was that part of Russian cultural effort which eventually found the greatest recognition abroad. At home, it undoubtedly was the most potent single expression of the spiritual life of the country. For a variety of reasons, of which the absence of free political life was only the most obvious

one, literature in Russia, the novel in particular, became a depository of social, political, moral, and religious ideas—and to a greater extent, I believe, than anywhere else in the modern world. The situation tended to place the writer in a position of great and peculiar responsibility. The readers looked upon him as a "teacher of life," and more often than not he felt that he had to meet the challenge of their expectation.

Hence, some of the characteristic features of the nineteenth-century Russian novel. Hence, in the first place, its "realism"—an ambiguous term which in this literature should be understood as meaning merely the author's preoccupation with contemporary life, in all its complexity and with all its contradictions. Hence, also, the predominant concentration of Russian novelists on character and psychological analysis, on inner feelings and spiritual conflicts rather than outward events or adventures. And hence, finally, their frequent attempts at posing to answer the "fundamental problems" of human existence. Nineteenth-century Russian literature was largely a "problem literature," and Russian novels frequently were "novels of ideas."

The tendency, of course, was not devoid of dangers. In many cases, it led to a narrow utilitarianism in art, and it gave birth to literary works in which a dull didacticism was combined with a neglect of the artistic form. But it was otherwise with the great masters of the nineteenth-century Russian prose. Perhaps their supreme achievement lay in the fact that they succeeded in dealing with "problems" and "ideas" in such a way that they did not distort the artistic qualities of their writings. One might say of them that while seeking for truth, they were seeking for it on the path of beauty.

Of these great masters, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky are generally acknowledged the greatest. Both in Russia and abroad, they have been looked upon as the two most representative Russian novelists, as two authentic spokesmen for Russia. And time and

again they have been paired by critics for the purposes of comparison and contrast.

Strangely enough, they never met, but in some respects fate brought them close together. They were contemporaries: Dostoevsky was born in 1821; Tolstoy, in 1828. Their careers began about the same time: Dostoevsky's first novel (*Poor Folk*) was published in 1846; Tolstoy's *Childhood,* in 1852. And although Tolstoy outlived Dostoevsky by almost thirty years (Dostoevsky died in 1881; Tolstoy, in 1910), the apogee of his creative activity fell within the same decades during which Dostoevsky's major works were published—in the 1860's and 1870's.

In other respects, however, their lives were widely different.

Tolstoy was an aristocrat, born into a respectable and wealthy family of landed gentlemen. His early life was uneventful and followed a course that was traditional in the social circles to which he belonged. After a brief study in a provincial university, in which he did not rise above the "gentleman's C" and from which he did not graduate, Tolstoy served in the Army. And it was during his military service that he began to write and publish. His early works immediately placed him in the forefront of Russian writers, but his personal contact with literary circles was of brief duration. Tolstoy had no desire to become a professional writer, and he did not feel at ease among the literati. Before long, he withdrew to his estate in central Russia, and it was there he spent most of his life, surrounded by a large family, free from material care—outwardly a typical country squire.

One would be tempted to say, "What a happy quiet life!", if one did not know from Tolstoy's own diaries and from his *Confession* the inner tragedy hidden behind this quiet surface. This tragedy began with the acute spiritual crisis which Tolstoy experienced when he was fifty-five years old, and it did not end

until his death at the age of eighty-two. But even so, one might say that Tolstoy's tragedy was of his own making, that he did not suffer from circumstances. Outwardly, he had everything a man could desire—love, friendship, fame, health, riches, and comfort.

If fate was not unkind to Tolstoy, it was cruel to Dostoevsky. Officially he too belonged to the "nobility," but in pre-revolutionary Russia this legal status covered a variety of life conditions. Actually, the Dostoevsky family stood far below the Tolstoys on the social ladder, and it was in straitened financial circumstances. Dostoevsky's was a rather joyless childhood, and there was no love lost between him and his stern father. From Moscow, where he was born and raised, young Dostoevsky moved to St. Petersburg, to enter as a student in the School of Military Engineers (in contrast with Tolstoy, Dostoevsky's surroundings were predominantly urban which might account for the pronounced "urbanism" of his literary work). Here his life was hard, he suffered from poor health and he was constantly in need of money. During his student years the first tragic experience came into his life. His father was murdered by serfs who revolted against their cruel master. There is some evidence to make us suspect that Dostoevsky (who did not love, and perhaps even hated, his father) looked upon himself as a "moral accomplice" in his father's murder—a situation one finds reproduced in *The Brothers Karamazov.*

The sensational success of Dostoevsky's first novel, which apparently turned his head, was followed by an almost generally hostile reception accorded his subsequently published work. Dostoevsky bitterly resented this criticism.

Then came the debacle. In April, 1849, with other members of a socialist "debating circle" which he had joined sometime before that, Dostoevsky was arrested and tried for revolutionary activity. A death sentence passed on some of the accused, including Dostoevsky, was commuted to a term of hard labor in

Siberia, a change in their fate which was not announced to the accused until they had been brought to the place of execution. The agony Dostoevsky had endured during these moments he described in *The Idiot* as well as in one of his autobiographical notes (*Diary of a Writer*). In Siberia he spent four years in the "House of Death" and six more years as an exile.

When at last he was permitted to return to European Russia, he resumed his literary activity and the insecure life of a professional writer and journalist. Dostoevsky was always in need of money and always in debt—a situation that was aggravated by his passion for gambling. He suffered from an incurable and exhausting malady (epilepsy), his first marriage was a dismal failure, and he went through a stormy and unhappy love affair. It was only in the last years of his life that he could enjoy a somewhat more settled life.

Equally striking was the difference in temperament between these two men of genius. Fundamentally, with all his soul-searching, Tolstoy was an optimist. He was full of vital power, of an unconquerable *joie de vivre*. He had a wonderfully keen eye for the beauties of life around him. With his feet firmly on the ground, he was of this world, and he had an almost pagan veneration for Mother Earth. His other side was that of stern moralist and exacting Christian idealist. This conflict between his pagan temperament and Christian conscience went on throughout his life. We know from his diaries that long before his "conversion" Tolstoy was beset with constant and acute moral doubts. The "conversion" greatly strengthened this strain in his nature, but it was not able to kill the pagan in him. It is enough to read certain parts of *The Resurrection* or some of Tolstoy's posthumously published stories to see to what extent this old man, now a preacher of ascetic morality, had retained his earlier life exuberance and his appreciation for earthly beauty.

There was no trace of this natural enjoyment of life in Dostoevsky. To him human life was a tragedy, a continuous

process of suffering from which there was no escape on earth. It was not necessary for Dostoevsky to combat his own nature to arrive at a religious approach to life: longing for the other world was very strong in him almost from the outset. He had his moments of joy, but they were akin to those ecstasies of which one can read in the accounts of mystical experience. They came as an anticipation of the final transfiguration of the world.

The very religiousness of Dostoevsky was different from that of Tolstoy. Tolstoy was a rationalist; Dostoevsky, a mystic. Tolstoy's was a religion of Christian morality, almost entirely devoid of supernatural elements, not unlike the eighteenth-century deism or some of the modern Protestant trends. Rejecting all organized churches with their ritual, hierarchy, dogmas, and sacraments, he concentrated his efforts on trying to persuade his fellow men that if only they would follow Christ's ethical teachings human life could be arranged in accord with both natural and divine law. Dostoevsky's religion was a religion of Christian humility, and a constant reminder of the existence of the other world. It was a religion of the humanity's mystical union in Christ, and Dostoevsky saw in Russia, with her traditional Greek Orthodox faith, a God-chosen instrument for the eventual realization of this union.

No less is the contrast between Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as writers. Tolstoy's literary art has a definite *epic* quality. The over-all impression it produces is one of majestic serenity. One has a feeling of watching life itself unfolding before one's eyes, with all its richness, warmth, and beauty. In reading Tolstoy's novels, one is not conscious of a deliberately constructed plot. His novels are like big chunks of life, enormous panoramas widespread in time and space alike, taking in their sweep an amazingly large number of people and events. In Tolstoy's literary technique, narrative and description prevail over dialogue and action. Tolstoy's avidity for details is prodigious. He sees and pictures his characters in the fullness of flesh, with their

minutest physical traits and individual mannerisms. To him they are not heroes, only ordinary human beings. And he does not place them in exceptional circumstances; he takes them as he finds them in their everyday existence. Even when there is a crisis or a tragedy in a life, the crisis or the tragedy still partake of "homely" quality which belongs to the natural order of things. Likewise, when Tolstoy deals with outstanding historic events, as in *War and Peace,* he shows them not in their heroic but in their "human, all too human," aspect. The world of Tolstoy is thoroughly a normal world.

With Dostoevsky, we enter into a profoundly different universe, one far removed from our own "normal" life. This universe is inhabited by people in distress with faces distorted by suffering or violent passion. It is a strange and disturbing world, and it might seem even incredible unless one realizes that Dostoevsky used in his novels what might be called an experimental method. Unlike Tolstoy, he was not interested in everyday life, and he deliberately placed his characters in extraordinary circumstances to make them behave in an "abnormal" fashion. Everyone of his great novels is a story of a crisis or rather of a series of crises. As a rule, it begins in an atmosphere already tense which becomes more and more tense as the action develops towards the climax. Under the pressure of this tension, people are forced to strip themselves of social conventions, of acquired habits of thought, of all that garb which is the work of routine and inertia. They become "naked souls," and it is in this state they reveal their innermost thoughts and feelings.

In conformity with his purpose, Dostoevsky developed a style and a technique of his own. Essentially, his art has a *dramatic* nature, and his novels have been called "tragedies in the form of a novel."

Dostoevsky is one of the few Russian writers in whose works the plot is of primary importance. Action is built around a central tragic event, with all the individual crises merging into one final

catastrophe. In contrast with Tolstoy's panoramas of life, there are no episodic characters in Dostoevsky's novels. All are drawn into the same whirlpool of passions and spiritual conflicts. Action develops at a breath-taking pace, with an abundance of dramatic events all happening in an extremely short period of time and within a narrowly circumscribed locality. Literary historians have noticed Dostoevsky's adherence to the classical formula of the three "dramatic unities"—action, time, and place.

In harmony with their dramatic character, dialogue plays a very prominent part in Dostoevsky's novels. The narrative itself has a conversational tone. In several of his novels Dostoevsky has used the device of an anonymous narrator. In one of them (*Raw Youth*) the story is told by the hero himself. But in the other novels, as well, one plainly hears the voice of a man who is in a hurry to tell his tale, and whose voice is vibrating with emotion.

Hence the peculiar feverish quality of Dostoevsky's style which forms such a striking contrast to the easy and calm flow of Tolstoy's narrative. Unlike Tolstoy, Dostoevsky has no interest in details as such. His landscapes and his interiors never are elaborate nor do they have an independent existence. They are very much in the nature of those brief remarks which a playwright makes to indicate the setting, and their function is psychological: they emphasize the actor's state of mind. Dostoevsky is equally sparing in describing the physical traits of his characters: essentially, these too are spiritual portraiture.

With all these striking differences between Tolstoy and Dostoevsky as writers, they have one important thing in common: they both are concerned with fundamentals, with the "eternal verities" of life. The preoccupation is more explicit in Dostoevsky, but it does not take long to discover it in Tolstoy, too. I am speaking here, of course, not of Tolstoy the moralist, as he developed in the later years of his life, but of Tolstoy the author of *War and Peace*. From this point of view, *War and*

Peace, written during Tolstoy's idyllic period, the first happy years of his married life, the time when his artistic vitality was at its highest, is more significant than either *Anna Karenina,* on which he worked on the eve of his "conversion," or *The Resurrection,* with its frankly moralist tendency. In *War and Peace* we face the paradox of an ostensibly historical novel the very essence of which is a denial of history. Not only does Tolstoy present historical events in their nonheroic aspects and show contempt for all who pretend that they are "making history" the very distribution of the emphasis between "war" and "peace" has for its purpose to convey one central idea: the showy side of history, with all its wars, revolutions, and other "big events," is but a passing shadow beside the phenomena of everyday human life. Governments might change and empires might crumble—men will pursue "the way of all flesh" at all times and under all conditions: they will be born, will grow up, love, marry, beget children, and die. This is one indisputable reality, eternal in its ever-recurring cycle. The other equally indisputable reality, this one eternal in its immobility, is the law of God as conceived by man's moral conscience. Thus human life is moving between two immutable poles—Mother Earth and the sky above it (that "remote blue sky" which Andrey Bolkonsky contemplates when lying wounded on the battlefield of Austerlitz) or, in other words, nature and God. All in between has no real substance and is irrelevant to the purpose of human existence.

However, in between lies precisely all that makes up the stuff of history: man-made laws, social and political institutions, customs and conventions, all that we call civilization. In *War and Peace,* Tolstoy plainly hints at their unreality. In the implicit assumptions of his great novel, one can find the germs of all the main elements of his latter-day philosophy: his revolt against civilization, his idealization of a "simple and natural" life, and his Christian anarchism.

In his own way, and starting from different premises, Dostoevsky arrived at somewhat similar conclusions. Here again the chief concern was with the individual rather than with society. Dostoevsky was interested in man as a moral being, not as a "political animal." Unlike Tolstoy, he had a sense of history and he was passionately absorbed in the study of contemporary politics. But his concept of history was akin to that of St. Augustine, and politics were to him a material on which he could base his philosophical and religious conclusions. He was not a believer in progress, and he condemned modern civilization as being materialistic and mechanistic. The end of history was not the creation of an earthly paradise, a vain and dangerous utopia, but the advent of the eternal City of God. In anticipation of that apocalyptic event, man's duty here on earth was to strive for the unity in Christ with his fellow-men. All attempts to unify humanity on any other basis, by means of outward authority, by social and political reforms alone, or by appealing to utilitarian arguments, were bound to end in a tragic failure. Their only result could be either a further disunion or the establishment of a most thoroughgoing despotism. One should begin with the regeneration of the human soul, its rebirth in Christ. And this could not be achieved without the active and conscious participation of every individual human being. A belief in man's freedom of will, which above all meant freedom of choice between good and evil, was one of Dostoevsky's most cherished ideas. Human soul was to him a battlefield on which a perennial struggle was going on between God and the Devil.

There are obvious dangers in both Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's approach to life, and it has been said of their works that they contain dynamite. It can be questioned whether either an individual or a nation could live according to Tolstoy or to Dostoevsky. There is in both of them a tendency towards the extreme, and a neglect of outward forms of human existence. In this they seem to be representative of such typical Russian

shortcomings as a relative indifference to legal norms and constitutional guarantees, a relative weakness of cultural traditions, and a lack of a sufficiently developed political and social self-discipline.

But if there is a danger in such shortcomings, there also is a danger in a placid adherence to the customary way of life or in a facile optimism which takes progress for granted. To remain a living and creative force, every tradition must be revised and reshaped from time to time. In the course of human history, the dead hand of a fossilized convention has been a more constant threat to mankind than any anarchical or apocalyptic tendencies. Both in the life of an individual, and in that of a nation, the force of inertia is one of the most potent and very often most dangerous factors. Neither do the social and political reformers, including those of the revolutionary brand, succeed in escaping from under its spell. The historical experience of our own age has demonstrated the existence of a revolutionary routine and of a radical conformism which is not a whit better; in fact, it can be worse than that of any "die-hard" conservative. For the rejuvenation of a cultural tradition, something more than a political or a social overturn is necessary. One has to go back to the fundamental problems of human existence.

In their preoccupation with these problems lies the significance of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. They both were great questioners and great probers of the human heart. In their search for what "really matters," neither of them was afraid to break through the wall of conventions which surrounds human life. Neither could be satisfied with an easy solution. Neither ever evaded an issue nor cast aside a doubt without having explored it to the bottom. There was no dogmatic finality in either Tolstoy or Dostoevsky. Their quest for truth was an adventure never ending. In his eighty-second year, Tolstoy found in himself enough strength to abandon his home and separate from his family because he came to the conclusion that

the life he had been living was not compatible with his moral beliefs. Spiritually, there was a similar restlessness in Dostoevsky. In his novels, denial and affirmation are expressed with equal force, and one cannot help feeling that they are in these a record of the dialogue that forever was going on in Dostoevsky's own soul.

The questions which Tolstoy and Dostoevsky have tried to answer were of universal importance. As writers, they approached them in a spirit of uncompromising honesty and frankness. Perhaps, in this spirit, too, they were representative of their people.

FRANKLYN B. SNYDER

Robert Burns

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of this distinguished committee, and of the audience. Thank you very much, Mr. Crouch, for your gracious words. There are two types of presiding officers, ladies and gentlemen. One says tactful things, as Mr. Crouch did; the other I experienced only a short time ago in my home town of Evanston where a chairman, looking at a watch, said: "And now we come to the serious part of the evening. Some of us have heard Mr. Snyder before, and some have not. Those who have not are looking forward with pleasure to the next half hour." There was a ripple of laughter, and I did as well as I could from the springboard of that quite truthful introduction. When I got home, about ten-thirty, my phone rang, and at the other end was a well-remembered voice. "What did I say when I introduced you tonight that made them laugh?" I quoted it, for it was a memorable sentence. There was a silence. "Well," he said, "I still don't see anything funny about it." Now, Mr. Chairman, if I have to choose between your gracious tact and the completely truthful literalness of my friend in Evanston, I very much prefer the Pittsburgh to the Evanston technique.

I'm afraid I should begin with an apology, for no person with a Dutch name like mine has any right to talk about Burns to an audience of Scots. And yet I do claim a Scottish great-grandmother, and her name was Agnes MacDonald. She married a man named Penfield, an Englishman. And the two of them came to the United States. Their oldest daughter, Marcia, married Peter Snyder, my grandfather. So, a great-grandmother by the name of Agnes MacDonald Penfield is my only claim to belonging to the society of Scotsmen!

What fun it is to be here! To forget the coal strike, the threat

of a telephone strike, and here in Pittsburgh, I understand, of a taxicab strike; of a railroad strike, and of a hydrogen bomb. To forget all those things which are unpleasant about the world of today, and to think for a little while about that very great man whose portrait stands on the easel yonder, and the poetry he wrote.

When he died, in July of 1796, Mrs. Walter Riddel of Dumfries, Maria Riddel, a woman whom Burns had loved and affronted, and who had forgiven the affront and cherished the memory of their friendship—this woman, Maria Riddel, wrote for the Dumfries weekly paper the first appreciation of Burns to appear in print after his death. Already people were saying unpleasant things about him. Maria Riddel, who knew him, wished to tell the truth. At the end of her little newspaper article, she summed it all up in these words: "He had an irresistible power of attraction." "An irresistible power of attraction." What was true in Dumfries in 1796 is true in Pittsburgh or Chicago in 1950. This man, and the work that he did, still have "an irresistible power of attraction." I am going to have the great pleasure of trying to explain to you what I find in this man that is so alluring.

Let's begin with a word about the background against which you should see Burns's life, and against which you should read his poetry. If we had a map of Scotland hanging over my head here, the Burns country, as we all know, would be in the lower left-hand corner of that map—Dumfriesshire and Ayrshire. Physically, a very beautiful part of the world, with hills and brooks and mountains, and always, there to the west, the ocean, and sunlight and shadow playing over the hillsides in a fashion which makes it a delight just to be alive on a summer day or a spring afternoon there in the Burns country.

Historically, Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire are full of stirring memories, for it was here that Wallace and Bruce started their great campaigns for Scottish freedom. And it was here that the

people who believed in the Church of Scotland held their conventicles in the glens and fought with Claverhouse's dragoons in order to establish, once and for all, their right to worship God in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences.

Racially, this part of Scotland was pure lowland Scots, with no intermingling of folk from the highlands or from across the sea in Ireland. It was a part of the world in which a boy with any sensitivity at all would be glad to grow up, for it was beautiful physically, and thrilling historically. And, more than that, the men and women who lived there had two great passions, both of them noble. They believed in education, and they believed in religion. Every parish had its village school, and the Royal Boroughs had their academies, and then there were the four universities to which any lad in the Kingdom could go, provided only he had the character and the intellect to win his way to one of those four institutions.

Religion? The established Church, the Church of Scotland, made itself felt in every parish through the Kirk Session; and above the Kirk Session, the Presbytery; and above the Presbytery, the Synod; and then, uniting all of Scotland, the General Assembly of the Church—a real Scottish Parliament, meeting in Holyrood Palace, and legislating—in fact, if not in law—for all the people of Scotland.

There were some unfortunate tendencies in that part of Scotland, as there are wherever you find human life. Alcohol flowed perhaps too freely. Sex was under no real inhibitions. It was an Ayrshire friend of mine who said to me: "Matrimony was invented by Queen Victoria." It was inevitable that there should be unpleasant passages in the history of many young men, and of some young women. But the fondness for education and the devotion to religion outweighed almost everything of an unfortunate sort in Burns's early environment.

It was a part of the world in which men and women read books and wished their children to be educated. The tradition that

when Burns went up to Edinburgh he was an unlettered plowboy, is pure nonsense. He was a well-read young man. Oh, he had relatively little formal education; but his father had seen to it, as you know, that he and his brothers should have the best teaching that was available in that part of the shire. And Burns himself, with his eagerness to learn and to know, had mastered much of English letters and English and Scottish history, and had played with French literature, and had even dipped into Latin, because he knew there was something there that was worth while. They were "reading people" whom Burns grew up with, hostile to tyranny of all sorts, hostile to hypocrisy of any sort, eager to give a young man his opportunities for self-development, and glad to claim him as one of theirs when he had made the most of those opportunities.

And there, in that southwest corner of Scotland, among people of that sort, and against a physical background so beautiful that one hardly knows where it can be duplicated—there, as we all know, the story of Burns's life began in a wintry day of 1759. Let's follow him through the five acts of his life, built almost like a Shakespearean tragedy: starting very humbly, rising to a magnificent climax, and then moving steadily down till it's lost in the shadows at the end.

If I were to give any name to the first act, I think I should call it "The Boy on the Farm." For twenty-five years, from 1759 to 1784, he was living in his father's home, first at Alloway, and after that on the farm of Mount Oliphant, and then at Lochlie. I had the great pleasure in the course of two longish summers in Scotland of going to every spot where Burns had ever lived, and of spending enough time there so that I could sort of get the feel of it. At Alloway, of course, the birthplace cottage is very much as it was when Burns was born. But today it is a great literary shrine. Sixty thousand people a year come there and pay their sixpences to go through the turnstile and just look about in those simple, unadorned rooms where Burns and his brothers

and sister grew up. Curious, isn't it? Out of that family of six children, five are known only because they were brothers or sister to Robert Burns. And yet they all had the same background, the same ancestry, the same opportunity. But on one the lightning fell from Heaven, and the whole world knows him.

On the farm at Mount Oliphant the land looks very much as it must have in 1775, when the Burns family was living there. But I had the misfortune to be chased off it by a magnificent Ayrshire bull who disliked my trespassing on a corner of his field. So I don't know much about the lay of the land at Mount Oliphant, but it has magnificent cattle on it, or it did in the summer of 1930.

At Lochlie,—where the father took the family as the children became more numerous—you can still see the foundations of the farmhouse where Burns and his family lived. In the hillside and the slope off to the east there's been no change at all. Even today it's a damp, rather unpleasant sort of soil. In Burns's day it was sour, and the father got poor crops, and went into bankruptcy. The experience broke his spirit, and broke his health.

And so, when the young man who was afterwards to be the poet, was twenty-five years old, he was faced with the sad fact of poverty. Hard work he had known, and that was of no significance. But when the process was issued against his father, and the sheriff's officers sequestrated all his goods and chattels, that they might be sold for the benefit of the creditors, then Robert Burns saw what it meant to be under the lash of a rather brutal landlord. And fortunately for his father, I presume, death intervened; and the good old man, instead of being haled off to jail, was carried away by his neighbors and buried in Alloway, where his body rests today under the stone on which are carved the simple lines that his son wrote in his honor.

Twenty-five years of hard work on unprofitable Scottish farms; poverty and labor;—and education? Yes. For they were reading people and they had books in the farmhouse even when

there was very little meal in the kitchen. And at the end of twenty-five years, Burns, the oldest of the children, finds himself the head of the family, with the widowed mother and the brothers and sister looking to him for guidance. And what does he do? With his next oldest brother, Gilbert, he rents the farm of Mossgiel in the town of Mauchline, about three miles away. And to that place, the lease of which he himself had now signed, he moved his little family in 1784. For two years he lived there in the second act of his life, which you might call "The Lover and The Poet."

For it's here at Mossgiel, when the father's direction and steadying influence have been removed, that Burns discovers the joys and the tragedies of love, and that he writes verse, which when printed in that little Kilmarnock volume, made him at once one of the world's great poets. Burns had a genius for falling in love. I once wrote, and submitted to the librarian of the public library in Dumfries, a lecture on Burns's character. And I said, "You know, Mr. Shirley, it's a little harsh, but I'm afraid one ought to say that no girl of Burns's social class was really safe in his company." And Shirley said, "No, the truth is that Burns was not safe in the company of any able-bodied Scotch lass."

He had indeed "an irresistible power of attraction." And here at Mossgiel he found himself, within a year, deeply and tragically involved with three girls: Bess Paton and Mary Campbell and Jean Armour. I suppose it is proper in an engineering environment such as Pittsburgh to use an engineering figure, and say that Burns made the mistake of wiring his love affairs in parallel and not in series. He had all three love affairs at once—and that meant tragedy in three women's lives. And when James Armour, Jean's father, saw the turn that things had taken, he sued out a writ against young Robin from Mossgiel farm to compel him to find surety for the support of the expected child.

And Burns, what could he do? Life was rather complicated for

him just then, and he saw only one avenue of escape, and that was to make a little money, if he could, and then with it to leave the country, perhaps taking one of the girls with him as his wife.

He'd been writing poetry. As he said, "I rhyme for fun." He'd been writing verses to show to his friends in the village, and they'd said: "Rob, there's never been anything like it. Write some more." And he'd written some more. And so when he needed twenty pounds or so to buy passage to Jamaica, he gathered together the verses that had already been written, and scribbled off a few more, and went over to Kilmarnock where there was a printing office, and drove a bargain to have his booklet printed.

Six hundred and sixty-odd copies were turned out, and Burns sold them himself for three shillings a copy. Oh, some of his friends took a few and helped peddle them, but mostly he seems to have done it himself, collecting the three shillings, not from all the 662, for some of them forgot their debts, but from enough of them so that he had his twenty pounds. For what? For having written and published what I think to be the most notable "first volume" in the whole history of English literature.

I know nothing else like it anywhere. For here are the poems, with only half a dozen exceptions, which the world knows and acclaims as Burns's greatest masterpieces. We'll say more about them in a few minutes.

And when he had his twenty pounds, and local fame, James Armour's attitude towards him changed. Instead of persecuting him and trying to drive him from that part of Scotland, he began to say that after all this young farmer would make a very good husband for Jean, and maybe he'd better relent a little, and treat him more decently. And so Burns, no longer under the necessity of leaving the country, decides to take the advice of his friends, and go up to Edinburgh to try his fortunes in the capital. And that begins the third act of his life, "The Adventurer in Edinburgh," from 1786 to 1788.

Towards the latter part of the eighteenth century, Edinburgh

was definitely the "first city" in the British Isles. Not the largest; London was larger. But in art, in literature, in law, in religion, in science, in general culture, Edinburgh set the pace and led the way. And this plowboy from down the country, borrowing a pony from a friend, rode up with fifteen pounds left in his pocket to capture Edinburgh, singlehanded. As desperate an undertaking as if he had tried to scale Castle Rock in the face of machine gun fire! The astonishing thing, of course, is that he succeeded! For there never had been anyone like him in Edinburgh before, nor has there been since.

It made no difference where he went; he was the center of every group. He was the person people looked at first and remembered longest. Another great Scotsman, Sir Walter Scott, was a lad of ten or twelve when Burns came to Edinburgh, and was allowed to attend one of the gatherings given in his honor, and to stand with the other boys in a corner, under orders to keep still. He wrote about it afterwards, remembering that day, and said: "I saw the great Vergil. His eye glowed; yes, I say, positively glowed." What was true of Burns's eyes was true of the man's whole personality. He was the wittiest, he was the ablest, and far and away the most interesting person in Edinburgh during those two years.

He had four great experiences while he was there. First, this great social success which, incidentally, did not "turn his head." And second, he brought out a new edition of his poems. His publisher, Creech, an Edinburgh printer and bookseller, brought out the so-called "Edinburgh 1787" edition, which was really the Kilmarnock edition with the addition of a few pages, but which sold all over the British Isles and made Burns known in London as up to that time he had been known only in part of Scotland.

Third, he learned that he could write songs, which he had not done before. He'd been writing Poetry, with a capital "P," and signing his name, "Robert Burns, Poet," with a capital "P." And now he began to discover that those old Scottish tunes and folk-

songs had something in them that was worth thinking about. He found he could take a scrap of song, a tune, and a few words, let it run through his mind and his imagination, play with it for a little while, and then give it back, immortalized by the touch of his genius. So it was at Edinburgh that he began to write songs.

And then he had another love affair,—unfortunately with a married woman. She would have made him a good wife; she was meant for him, as we say. And he certainly was meant for her. Her name was Nancy Craig, or Mrs. Agnes McLehose. He called her "Clarinda" and she called him "Sylvander," and they wrote letters to one another while Burns was laid up with a badly bruised knee. They'd met one another only once, and that at a tea party where she had gone to see Burns and to meet him. When she met him, she invited him to come and call on her. And on the way back his horse fell and he was laid up for six weeks.

But they wrote letters. They're rather sappy things as you read them today, "Sylvander" and "Clarinda." And they just play around the central idea, till finally he says, "How I love you," and she says, "How glad I am that you do." And then he got well, and went to see her. And he protected her from the impetuosity of her own passions. There's no doubt of that: *he* protected *her*.

People didn't like her conduct very well. Her husband was over somewhere in the West Indies, living with a native mistress. But poor Nancy couldn't get a divorce for a little matter like that. She was seen in the company of Burns by her uncle, who was a respectable member of the better class of society. He remonstrated with her and said if she didn't mend her ways, he might have to reduce her allowance. And she said, "Dear Uncle Jim, I would rather live on nothing with Burns, than live on all your money without him."

And then the Reverend John Kemp, the minister of the Canongate Church of which she was a member, spoke to her about it, and said that she was a respectable married woman, and was

being talked about, and she shouldn't be seen any more in the company of Burns. And what did she do? She took Burns to church with her, and they sat right in front of the pulpit and smiled at the Rev. John Kemp. But no real happiness could come from such a relationship. It couldn't lead to anything but tragedy. So Burns he went back to the farm, and left with Nancy the lines beginning

> "Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
> Ae fareweel, alas, forever!"

Do you remember the end of the second stanza? Four lines that Byron said " . . . contain the essence of a thousand love stories," where he put his finger on the truth. Her uncle had said, "It's scandal"; the Rev. John Kemp had said, "It's a sin"; but Burns said, "It's a tragedy."

> "Had we never loved sae kindly,
> Had we never loved sae blindly,
> Never met—or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken hearted."

And so he went back to the farm again and married Jean, who had already borne him five children.

Yes, he married Jean and began life again as a farmer. That's the fourth act. And again it's an unhappy one, for he was never meant to be a farmer. He took the farm of Ellisland, six miles up the river from Dumfries. I found the original lease on that farm in the collection of a man living in Chicago. And how the landlord had tied this poor fellow up; a pound per acre per year sterling. Not a chance in the world of making that amount of money. He could do nothing except take what he found and work himself to death. He discovered within six months it was a bad bargain. He had his father's genius for poor business arrangements.

But fortunately, before many years, a man came along who

wanted to buy the farm and the estate it was attached to. And Burns was freed from this entanglement and allowed to go south to Dumfries, where he began the last act of his life as an exciseman and a writer of songs. And there for two or three years, from 1791 to at least 1794, he and Jean and the children were happy.

You can still see the little house they lived in. It isn't at all pretentious, it's simple; but it's livable. And it still stands, for it was well-built of sound Scottish masonry. And there Burns lived and worked as an exciseman, or a member of His Majesty's Internal Revenue force. He rode two hundred miles a week on horseback, measuring beer, collecting duty on all sorts of things. He did the job very well, too; so well, indeed, that after two years and a half he was due for the promotion that normally would come only after eight or ten. But, of course, it was breaking him physically.

For, long before, when he was fifteen years old, he had had rheumatic fever, a ghastly thing even today, which takes a great toll of our young people despite all that modern science has been able to do to alleviate it. And in those days—well, they knew very little about such things. And Burns had rheumatic fever, but was strong enough to recover from it reasonably well. Then he had it again, and the curve went lower. And here in Dumfries, during his last two years, he was sick much of the time.

Medical science was then very crude, and did apparently what was exactly wrong; prescribing exercise and sea-bathing, when he should have been resting in bed. The result, of course, was inevitable. By the end of July, 1796, Burns was dead.

He had enemies in Dumfries, for he had a sharp tongue in his head and he had made some people dislike him. And those who disliked him said: "He drank himself to death; he ran about with the women; he was a hell-raiser; and he's better gone." And his friends said: "He drank no more than the rest of you. He took good care of his family. He worked hard and honorably in his job. He paid his debts. And he was the most lovable person we have ever known."

What killed him? They did not know in 1796. But it's interesting to remember, that some thirty years ago a Scottish physician, Sir James Crichton-Browne, taking Burns's letters, in which he kept a record of his health, and analysing them, said: "This seems to me to be a typical case of endocarditis, developing after two or three attacks of rheumatic fever." He published his conclusions in a little volume, *Burns from a New Point of View.* But very few people read it. Just about the same time, a physician in Toronto did the same thing, not knowing anything about Crichton-Browne's booklet, and he came out with the same conclusion.

When I was working on Burns, I took the two documents to the best diagnostician on our school of medicine, and said: "Dr. Cutter, I wish you'd read these and tell me whether there's any sense in them or not." And he read them, and they passed round among the department of medicine. And you should have seen how excited those people got. For, they said, at last we know the truth about Burns. It wasn't alcohol; it wasn't venereal disease—there's no sign of that; it was bacterial endocarditis, that killed the poor fellow. The wonder is, that he lived for thirty-seven and a half years.

Well, that was the end of the story. Beginning there in the shadows at Alloway, moving up towards that magnificent climax at Edinburgh—when he had the Kingdom at his feet. And then down again, like a Shakespearean tragedy, to the end in the Mill Vennel at Dumfries—and the funeral on a rainy July afternoon.

"An irresistible power of attraction." Everybody who came within the orbit of his life *knew* that here was a man! Some people disliked him, but not many. Most of them admired him and loved him. For what he was? Yes, and also for what he did. What did he do? Well, he wrote one great volume of verse, the Kilmarnock edition, and half a dozen other notable poems, and a handful of immortal songs.

If you happen to have a copy of the Kilmarnock volume don't

give it away recklessly. Save it. It's worth much money. And if, by any chance, Burns scribbled a note on the flyleaf, well, one sold at auction not long ago, one of these three-shilling booklets, one sold at auction for approximately $20,000. An indication of inflation? Oh no, appreciation. Nothing else.

In that Kilmarnock volume, which to all intents and purposes represents him at his best, what did he do? Well, he wrote a good deal of poetry that's rather mediocre. How could it be anything else? Busy, overworked, he had relatively little time for polishing and finishing. Some things that Burns printed in that first volume brought relatively little credit to him. But the rest—the ten or a dozen great things—how superb they are: "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "The Holy Fair," "To a Mouse," "To a Mountain Daisy," and perhaps four or five more in which he pictured the men and women whom he knew and loved and was growing up with, and the world in which they lived. The best of those are as certainly great art as anything ever written in any language.

Afterwards, when he learned that he could write songs, 384 of them came from his pen. Just think of it! Three hundred and eighty-four. Perhaps 300 were just ordinary Scottish songs; and forty or fifty are much better than that, and the rest of them are pure gold. For in them he told the truth about those things that make life so unbelievably beautiful and so pathetically tragic. He wrote simply, for people like you and me. And no one has ever written better than he did.

It's very dangerous for a Yankee to read Burns to an audience like this, but I'm going to do it just the same—one or two little things. And here's one that is almost all English, except he spells love "l-u-v-e," but you don't have to pronounce it that way.

> "O, my luve's like a red, red rose,
> That's newly sprung in June:"

. . . . . .

It's the noblest thing in life, ladies and gentlemen, the love of a

man for a woman, of a woman for a man. Burns knew it, and touched it with glory.

Here's another:

> "Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
> How can ye blume sae fair?"
>
> . . . . . .

Or the sixteen lines of "John Anderson." Originally "John Anderson" was an absolutely disreputable old drinking song. And Burns ran across it, and purified it, and in sixteen lines told everything you and I hope we can say, as we come down to the bottom of the hill at the end of the day.

It's interesting, that here it's a woman talking. Burns could write from the man's point of view, and he could write from the woman's point of view too.

> "John Anderson my jo, John,
> When we were first acquent,"
>
> . . . . . .

And then that marvelous second stanza, in which he sums up so much of human experience:

> "John Anderson my jo, John,
> We clamb the hill thegither;"
>
> . . . . . .

Can you "explain" such things? No, ladies and gentlemen, you cannot! Except that every now and then the gods who take care of us send a great genius into this world. And Burns was one of them.

He could take the twenty-six letters of the alphabet and put them together in such patterns that you and I, a century and a half after his death, read them and wonder at them. We say, this Scot *knew* men and women. He loved men and women. He despised hypocrisy and meanness, and he pilloried them. Read

"Holy Willie's Prayer," the most biting satire on hypocrisy that I know. He glorified the beauty of everyday life. He looked about him in the fields and he saw the mouse. And other people driving a plowshare through a mouse's nest, stamped with a heavy boot, and went on. But Burns said, "There's a symbol of human life. There I am, the earth-born companion and fellow mortal of that little animal." What bond is there between the mouse and the man? They're both earth-born, and born to die. And he made the tragedy of the mouse symbolic of his own life, and of all life which comes to an unhappy end:

> "Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
> O, what a panic's in thy breastie!"
>
> . . . . . .
>
> That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble,
> Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!"

If there was ever genius in poetry, it's in that line. Most people would have said, if they'd stopped to say it at all: "That wee bit heap of leaves and stibble has cost thee many a weary *hour*." But not Burns. He could see the mouse:

> "Has cost thee mony a weary *nibble!*
> Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,"
>
> . . . . . .

And then, linking the mouse to himself, and seeing in that tragedy there the tragedy that he feared in his own life:

> "But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
> In proving foresight may be vain"
>
> . . . . . .

And as the shadows lengthened in that November afternoon, he drove it all home:

"Still, thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:"

. . . . . .

I once said in print, "That is as great art, in its way, as Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Dante's *Divine Comedy*." And I know I told the truth.

An American poet, Bliss Carman, in one of those lovely *Songs from Vagabondia,* wrote about the two Bobbies. And the two Bobbies were Bobby Browning, the good boy, who turned the language inside out, and nobody cared very much; and then there was Ayrshire Bobby, the bad boy; Bobby Burns, "Who loved," says Bliss Carman, "and made the world his lover." "He loved, and made the world his lover." If you can ever explain the secret, ladies and gentlemen, of Burns's life, and of that "irresistible power of attraction," it's in just that. That he knew people like ourselves; and he loved us, for our weaknesses as well as for our strengths; and we love him for his human understanding and his very great art.

ADOLPH B. BENSON

Swedish Literature: Its Tendencies and Principal Writers

To THE average non-Scandinavian of today, a reference to Swedish literature suggests first of all, if anything, either Selma Lagerlöf or August Strindberg. A few ambitious students may have read more recent works like Frans G. Bengtsson's *The Red Orm* or Vilhelm Moberg's *The Earth is Ours,* or they may recall that the late nonagenarian Axel Munthe, the physician and author of the best seller, *The Story of San Michele,* was Swedish. Some enthusiasts of broader interests have perhaps read Verner von Heidenstam, poet, patriot, and novelist; possibly Viktor Rydberg, creator of *Singoalla* and *The Last Athenian;* and the leading modern poets Axel Karlfeldt and Gustav Fröding; while those of unusual literary appreciation may have plunged into the esthetics of Anders Österling, Ola Hansson, and Vilhelm Ekelund. Of the names mentioned three are Nobel-Prize winners, and that does not include Fröding or Strindberg, probably the greatest in the group.

Educated Swedes know, and Swedish immigrants of fifty years ago knew very well, the name of the Finn Johan Ludvig Runeberg, because he wrote, in Swedish, a patriotic modern epic, *The Tales of Ensign Stål* (Fänrik Ståls sägner), which memorialized the Finnish war of 1809 and contained the inimitable "Sven Duva," a poem about a simple-minded but heroic soldier that every Swedish schoolboy learned by heart in those earlier days. And Runeberg wrote, in Swedish also, the Finnish national anthem "Our Country" (Vårt land), which prefaces the epic. The English critic Edmund Gosse, perhaps extravagantly, called Runeberg the greatest patriotic poet of all time.

And the same generation which followed the rhythm, pathos, and persuasive force of "Sven Duva" sighed and sympathized, smiled and wept, with Per and Kersti in the popular romantic poem "At the Värnamo Fair," (På Värnamo marknad) by Karl Snoilsky, a high-rate Swedish poet of aristocratic Polish descent.

A century ago English, and particularly American, women literally devoured the domestic novels by Fredrika Bremer, a Swedish novelist whose works had been brought to the Harvard College Library by Longfellow, reviewed by Lowell, and praised by Walt Whitman, who asserted that next to the Bible young people should read the wholesome fiction by Miss Bremer. A few years ago, lecturing before a women's club on "The Women in Swedish Literature," an old lady told me at the end of the talk that in her youth no young lady would think of going to bed without taking along a copy of some novel by this Swedish spinster and feminist. And the fact that Fredrika, later, said nice things about us in the 1300-page *Homes of the New World*, describing her travels in America, did not lessen her popularity. A few Americans of her day, i.e. a century ago, also read the more or less sensational seacoast novels of Emilia Flygare Carlén, in fair translations; and for a time the utilitarian but popular "tendency" novels of Marie Sophie Schwartz were published and read in this country.

Best known of Swedish writers of all time, though not in the field of letters, is probably the scientist, mystic, and religious philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg, who a century ago greatly interested Emerson and the other New England transcendentalists, and whose followers, in religion at least, still number thousands in the United States. In fact, what we may call *the* Swedenborg library center and cathedral in the world is now located in Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania. As for Esaias Tegnér, whose "Children of the Lord's Supper" (Nattvardsbarnen) was translated by Longfellow, his best-known work *Frithiof's Saga* (Frithiofs saga), despite renderings of fragments of it by

Longfellow, the later editing of it by Bayard Taylor, and fifteen separate complete translations of it, is still little known in America, except in a few Swedish and academic circles. Several of the Swedish writers already named are now well-nigh forgotten in America, the principal names still retained being—let me repeat—Lagerlöf, Strindberg, and Swedenborg. The only notable exception perhaps is Carl Mikael Bellman, the unique national Swedish poet-singer of the eighteenth century, who in 1939 was presented to the Anglo-American public in a serious form, as *The Last of the Troubadours,* in quarto format, with music and English words, by Hendrik Willem van Loon and Grace Castagnetta. The publication of this volume is an encouraging sign, but it is exceptional. We may well ask: why is Swedish literature not better known in foreign lands, especially in the United States? The answer will be found, in part, in the definite tendencies and characteristics of it. The belated appearance of the Bellman work gives, indirectly, what is probably the chief reason for this condition, namely its peculiarly lyric quality. It is full of poetry, good poetry, and this is the distinguishing character of Swedish polite literature as a whole. While Sweden has produced some good novels, particularly historical ones, and one first-rate international dramatist—Strindberg—the vast bulk of Swedish letters is still *lyrical.* Selma Lagerlöf's novels and stories in fairy-style prose, are really *poems,* with an abundance of fantasy, legend, and folklore; and even at the present time, despite numerous realistic prose works dealing with modern conditions of society, for example, an incredible amount of verse is being written. Sweden's lakes, mountains, and forests; Swedish temperament; and Swedish seriousness and philosophy of life, whether gay or sombre, have found their best expression in poetry, which is supposedly the highest type of literary expression. This being the case, we can see at once why it is not too well known outside of Scandinavia; its lyrics are, many of them, almost untranslatable. Not many can read Fröding or Karlfeldt

in the original; most students must limit their reading in Swedish belles-lettres to translations; and these are seldom excellent. Bellman must have presented special difficulties in translation, and the fact that it has been attempted at all augurs well perhaps for the future. It had been tried before, of course, but with only moderate success. We have reasonably readable English translations of many Swedish poets, and notably through those of a Pennsylvania poet, Charles Wharton Stork; but no one who can read the original can conceive of the spirit and substance of these poets in any language but Swedish, and much indeed is lost in the translation, no matter how good the translator. Hence, one reason for the small knowledge we have of Swedish literature is the extreme difficulty of transferring its wealth of lyrics or lyrical writings into English.

A criticism sometimes made against Swedish and other Scandinavian literatures is that it is frequently too sad, gloomy, and tragic to suit Anglo-American readers—we want, for instance, a happy ending in our novels. This charge is certainly true, in part; but with the Northern writers truth, as they see it, and individual artistry come first, whatever the consequences. Besides, Swedes have lived on the Scandinavian peninsula for several thousand years, battling against the Northern climate and other severe conditions: their life has been hard, and their expression of this inheritance in literature, therefore, often takes the form of a marked seriousness, pitiless realism, pessimism and disillusionment. Much indeed is written in the minor key, like their inherited folksongs. And, as for the native Swedes, they like their literature: they are perhaps happiest when they are sad. Probably their religion has colored and accentuated this tendency, for the Swedes *are* religious, even if they don't go to church as often as formerly, and their literature from the Middle Ages, when they were Catholics, down to the death, in the nineteenth century, of their Lutheran Archbishop Johan Olof Wallin—who wrote over a hundred hymns for the Swedish

Psalter—proves this fact. There always has been in Sweden an appreciable emphasis on catechisms, Psalters, Bibles, and devotional writings. Even during the rationalistic period of the eighteenth century, many hymns were written; pietism and Hernhuterism imported from Germany flourished; and it was during this time that Swedenborg lived and wrote about "Divine Love and Wisdom," "Heaven and Hell," and about the continuity of life in the next world. We shall come back briefly to this subject later. Incidentally, such modern novels as Sigfrid Siwertz's *Downstream,* dealing with the egotism and consequential degeneration of the Selambs family—which has been well translated into English and is captivating, powerful, and artistically highly commendable—*is* depressive, and, with other works like it, gives to beginners probably a distorted impression of Swedish literature as a whole. Unfortunately, or fortunately, this type of writing is, relatively, easily translatable.

But Swedish literature is not in the aggregate depressive. For more than two hundred years it has had an abundance of wit, satire, humor, and gaiety, with names like Olof von Dalin, Anna Maria Lenngren, Jacob Wallenberg, Johan Henrik Kellgren, C. M. Bellman, Wilhelm von Braun, August Blanche, August Bondeson, Gustav Fröding, and, last but not least, Albert Engström, late editor of the humorous journal *Strix* and member of the Swedish Academy, whose portrayal of common folk, particularly the old fishermen of the Stockholm skerries, is unsurpassable in any literature. The trouble is that Swedish humor is so national, so closely bound to the local Swedish soil, language, traditions, and conditions that it is even more difficult to translate into a foreign tongue than pure lyrics. In most cases it simply cannot be done. As a result, while we know *something,* in America, for example, about serious lofty Swedish poetry, even those who read English only, we know almost nothing about the lighter and often much more brilliant Swedish literature. Any attempt at translation removes all color, flavor, and point, from

the story, whether in verse or prose. Naturally, we have exceptions, like Hjalmar Söderberg's "The Parson's Cows," a classic tale of an embarrassing situation, which does not depend so much on language for translation as on certain facts and circumstances which can be reproduced reasonably well in any dialect. And there is depth, substance, and permanency in most Swedish writings of the humorous type—I am not speaking of the coarser, everyday, conversational variety common in some circles among all peoples—because, as in the case of our own Mark Twain, for example, the incidents related are intimately grounded in human experience and are based on natural, psychological factors. A masterpiece of wholesome Swedish humor is *The Memoirs of Johan Chronschough,* by Bondeson, which deals with a proud, happy, self-satisfied small-town public schoolteacher, who feels, and quite rightly so, that the world, the whole of it, revolves about himself and his work. It is intensely human and Swedish.

A form of literature which admirably suits the Swedish temperament, whether of laborers or kings, is that of grandiloquent oratory (vältalighet). Not all Swedish oratory has been printed—probably fortunate—and the old types of it are disappearing, but in the past there seems to have been some outstanding examples of it, and a few have been preserved like those by King Gustavus Vasa, Gustavus Adolphus, and Gustavus III. The latter, also a dramatist of note, was the one, you may remember, who in 1786 founded the Swedish Academy, the institution which now awards the Nobel Prize in literature. Speaking of royal authors, it might be recorded here that in the nineteenth century Charles XV and Oscar II, each published two volumes of poems. The latter, in fact, was an Academy prize winner and a successful translator from the German. In our own day Prince William's lectures and writings are tolerably well known, even outside his own land, being, at heart, an explorer of foreign territories, about which he writes.

A marked characteristic of Swedish letters, in spite of strong prolonged influences from abroad, has been the national and, on the part of authors, personal independence, from the fourteenth century down to the present. Swedish writers have at crucial periods often maintained an active independent attitude of incredible intensity and originality. This was the case when St. Birgitta (sometimes called St. Bridget) of the Middle Ages severely criticised not only life at the Swedish court but chastised cardinals and popes, princes of the Church, in the rest of Europe. Yet, she was a good Roman Catholic. Olaus Petri, during the Reformation Period, showed unbelievable courage and determination when at the risk of his life, in his historical writings, he relied objectively on facts, truths, as he saw them, rather than on patriotic feeling. He was amazingly fair, even to the Danes, who immediately after the Stockholm massacre of 1520 could not expect much sympathy from the Swedes. This was a dangerous policy, but Petri stuck to and followed his own convictions. Even in the long period of obvious French, and later English, influence, from the middle of the seventeenth century to about 1810, during which French *form* became the model for poetry and the English *Spectator* for Swedish prose, the subject matter was largely national or personal. This in addition to untold numbers of idylls, epigrams, and pastorals of the international pattern. Dalin and J. H. Mörk, a novelist, treated Swedish topics; even during the Age of Reason when she was supposed to keep her feelings to herself Fru Hedvig Charlotta Nordenflycht poured out her innermost personal sorrows in melancholy verses; Gustavus III and Karl Gustav av Leopold, ardent adherents of the French School, both wrote historical dramas dealing with national characters; and at the end of the eighteenth century, when feeling and imagination, sponsored vehemently by Thomas Thorild and Bengt Lidner, were battling against rigid French classicism, Kellgren felt himself obliged to warn his obstreperous opponents, in a witty article, 1787, that

"A Person is not a Genius because He is Crazy." Both creative writers and critics were irritably independent, and did as they pleased. As a result, Swedish literature in general remained sane. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a group of gifted philosophizing youngsters, led by Per Daniel Amadeus Atterbom, imported Romantic ideas from Germany and began to pour out obscure sonnets by the score, a national movement, The Gothic School, arose simultaneously, which chose its themes from ancient Swedish tradition and history, and to this group belonged Per Henrik Ling, the founder of Swedish gymnastics, Erik Gustav Geijer, and Esaias Tegnér. Others remained neutral in the conflict, again exhibiting independence. K. J. L. Almqvist, the strangest figure in Swedish letters, published, in 1838, a radical novelette, *It Can Be Done* (Det går an), which almost landed the author in jail, since through the action and suggestion of its heroine, an independent woman who earned her own living, it preached a form of free love. And it was written by a clergyman. Later Fredrika Bremer, in *Hertha* (1856), championed the independent status of woman; and practically in our own day Ellen Key became internationally famous through her well-nigh revolutionary ideas about the place of woman and child in human society. In this case, the ideas, though they emanated from remote Sweden, were generally considered to be of universal significance and were translated into several languages. The humanist Viktor Rydberg, in the fifties, in the aforementioned *The Last Athenian,* pleaded ardently for freedom of thought and religious toleration—which was not then as fashionable as it is today—pursued the same theme in the *Armorer* (Vapensmeden), localized during the Reformation, and in other works boldly attacked the narrow dogmas of the Church as against free religious thinking. More independence and courage! Strindberg, later, certainly went his own way; so did, in opposition to Strindberg or his theories, Selma Lagerlöf and von Heidenstam, neither one of whom were

won over by Strindberg's rabid and often unjust Naturalism. On the contrary. And today there is no school of literature in Sweden, so far as we know. Each writer goes his own way. Even the Swedish Academy, which is supposed to be conservative, has not hesitated to award the Nobel Prize in literature to Eugene O'Neill and Sinclair Lewis, who can hardly be termed idealistic or conservative in the usual sense. But the Academy has shown *its* independence. Now, Swedish conservatives, socialists, and communists alike write and publish pretty much what they please, each group maintaining its own policy. Each group, however, closely watches the activities of others. No wonder there is a vital, vigorous, wide-awake literature in Sweden.

Few non-Scandinavians realize—I have learned—that there ever was a Swedish literature before Swedenborg. It seems to be little known that, except for gaps of decline common in the history of any literature, there was a form of continuity in the history of Swedish letters from about the year 1200 down to the present. It is important to remember this, especially for those whose literary constellations seem to revolve almost exclusively about Strindberg as the *only* guiding star of *all* intellectual and literary solar systems. Mark you, I am not trying to darken or lessen his reputation—he is considered by many to be the greatest of all Swedish writers—I am only anxious to emphasize that there were other stars in the Swedish firmament, among whom we find hundreds of capable ones, including scores of the first and second order. *The Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature* gives the biographies of sixty Swedish writers, and that includes only those after 1870, chosen from a selected list of about two hundred. Let us survey briefly the chief developments of Swedish letters, from 1200 to, let us say, about 1940.

Of the pagan literature, though there must have been such, little or nothing in writing remains. We have nothing like the Icelandic Eddas or Sagas. The 2500 Runic inscriptions in

Sweden have only an archeological, linguistic, and sentimental value. But, during the Catholic period in the Middle Ages, we had, in the native Swedish, the provincial laws and rhymed chronicles, which sometimes contained matter beyond the compass of legal statutes and historical facts, and Sweden kept in cultural contact with the rest of Europe by translating and adapting the South-European romances to the Swedish vernacular. The one outstanding personality of the Period was St. Birgitta (d. 1373), of noble birth, the daughter of a lawyer, who established the Brigittine Order at Vadstena, and whose *Revelations,* first dictated in Swedish and then put into Latin by her Father Confessor, circulated in manuscript all over Europe and was first published in Lübeck in 1492. Her influence has extended to this day, particularly of course in Catholic circles: in 1947 a new biography of St. Birgitta appeared in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, entitled *God's Ambassadress* (which the present speaker has read and reviewed). It had been written by a nun in the Brigittine convent at the Syon Abbey in England, which is still carrying on the work originally started at Vadstena in Sweden. It should be remembered, too, that St. Katherine of Sweden was the oldest daughter of St. Birgitta. (It is well to recall that Sweden produced both Vikings and saints.) "But," you may say, "saints are not ordinarily supposed to have daughters; is this maybe another chapter of Swedish independence?" In part, yes; but Birgitta did not professionally, as we might say, begin her more serious religious work, her militant aspects of it, until her husband had passed on, for she did have a wedded husband, who in part at least seems to have sympathized with her religious aspirations. It is a curious fact, too, that the practical Birgitta herself never was a nun; yet she was canonized less than twenty years after her death, which is quite remarkable when we consider that it took about four hundred years to canonize Joan of Arc. It has been asserted that the Swedish Government had bribed the Vatican to produce the desired

results. If so, Sweden must have been a country of some influence in the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century Bishop Tomas wrote patriotic poems and the folksong bloomed.

During the Lutheran Reformation of the sixteenth century, Swedish literature remained chiefly religious, with the main influence coming, of course, from Germany. Its only great personality, besides that of the eloquent King Gustavus Vasa, was the above-noted Olaus Petri, who had studied in Germany under Luther himself; and the principal published work of the Period, of literary consequence, was the translation of the Bible, 1541. From that time on Sweden had a literary language of its own of real possibilities.

In the following century, besides Gustavus Adolphus, orator and hymnodist, there were four highly individualistic personalities, who stand out as leaders of culture of that epoch which for Sweden was so great and yet became so tragic through the death of the Warrior King. From now on, for almost two hundred years, we have, at least so far as *form* is concerned, French influence in Swedish literature. The intellectually brilliant Queen Christina, daughter of the Savior of Protestantism, who after her abdication reverted to Catholicism, made her Court the center of the foreign culture by importing learned foreigners to Stockholm, among whom was the French philosopher Descartes. Poor Descartes, who felt chilly, frozen in the Swedish capital, had to get up and give the ambitious and independent Queen lessons in philosophy at five o'clock in the morning, and this killed the philosopher in three months. He died in Stockholm. The second personality was Georg Stiernhielm, Court Poet, frequently called "The Father of Swedish Poetry," who was a very learned and versatile man, who introduced a number of antique verse-forms, and Alexandrines, into Swedish verse; wrote ballets and sonnets; and one large didactic work in hexameters, *Hercules.*

The third prominent Swedish literary figure of the Century

was a lyric poet, a fascinating adventurer of unpredictable proportions, a vagabond, Lars Wivallius. He had wandered all over Europe, and on his return to Sweden had masqueraded as a nobleman, calling himself Erik Gyllenstierna, and won in Skåne the love of a real nobleman's daughter. But the deception was discovered, Wivallius was hurled into prison, and almost lost his life. After many years he was finally set free and died as a lawyer in Stockholm, 1669. It was in jail that his best poems were written, for example: "Ack, Libertas, du ädla ting!" (Oh, liberty, Thou noble thing," or, in a freer translation: "Oh, liberty, how wonderful!"). When in prison he realized the value of freedom, and meant what he wrote. His lyric warmth and love of nature were sincere. He reminds one of the French vagabond poet François Villon.

The printed work which during the century caused the greatest sensation, all over Europe, was Olof Rudbeck's *Atlantica* (1679-1702), a monumental compilation, in Latin and Swedish, of an unbelievable amount of learning and pseudo-learning, but which in its conception and conclusions turned out to be what we may call a magnificent mistake. On the basis of the Greek myth about the lost continent Atlantis, and through what Rudbeck believed to be definite linguistic similarities in the Greek and Scandinavian sources, the author proclaimed Scandinavia, i.e. Sweden particularly in this case, as being the long-lost Atlantis, and Sweden, therefore, the cradle of civilization. Swedes were descendants of Noah's son Japhet, said Rudbeck, who had come to Scandinavia 2200 B.C., right after the Babylonian Confusion of Tongues. Most readers, both educated and non-educated, Swedes and foreigners, at the time, believed Rudbeck's conclusions, although there were a few skeptics. The Swedes themselves were inordinately proud, of course, to think that culture started in their fatherland. Rudbeck, a real scientist in other respects—he discovered the lymphatic vessels in the human body—went astray in this case in an ecstasy

of nationalistic feeling. Besides, four enormous tomes—I have seen them—carried the illustrious history of the Swedes only as far as—Abraham. But it was immensely popular.

There was also in this Period an abundance of ethical and religious writings, hymns and more pretentious works, principally by Hakvin Spegel, who wrote a book on the Creation, *God's Work and Rest* (Guds Värk och Hvila), and by Bishop Jesper Svedberg, titular head of the Swedish congregations on the Delaware, and father of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Two cultural Swedish giants tower above all others in the eighteenth century, giants who made Sweden known intellectually in other lands: Swedenborg, and the universally-famed originator of the binomial nomenclature in animals and plants—Karl von Linné (Linnæus). The former, first a pioneer scientist—geologist, physiologist, physicist, mechanic, and mining engineer—wrote almost entirely in Latin, and after his conversion, about 1740, devoted most of his time to religious speculation, and was then considered either actually a divinely-inspired human messenger or a raving madman. His simultaneous activities in the House of Lords of the Swedish Riksdag, of which he was a member, certainly do not, however, indicate insanity. Swedenborg remains the great mystery in Swedish history. In the meantime large numbers of Americans, for example, still worship God according to the guidance suggested by this Swedish seer, a guide in which God is both Love and Reason.

Swedenborg does not, of course, belong strictly in the field of polite letters. Neither does the botanist Linné, but the latter through his masterly travel literature, in Swedish, became in writing a model of clear Swedish prose. He is a stylist. His scientific works appeared, naturally, in Latin, the language of the learned, and when, for example, he corresponded with the Pennsylvania botanist John Bartram, he did so in Latin. It was during this period that the Swedish Academy of Sciences was established, 1739, and Linné, apparently, was its chief founder.

Incidentally, he classified about 800 of our American plants, including the Pennsylvania and Connecticut State Flower, the mountain laurel, which by Linné was named *Kalmia latifolia* after his Swedish-Finnish pupil Peter Kalm, who, among other colonial places, traveled and studied in Pennsylvania and wrote extensively about it and other states at the middle of the century. Swedenborg and Linné were, logically, both products of the Age of Reason and scientific research. Literary sponsors of this "Enlightenment" on the Swedish Parnassus were: Dalin, Lenngren, Kellgren, and Leopold, whom we have mentioned; Fredrik Gyllenborg, who imitated an English poet, Thompson; and Gustaf Philip Creutz. Creutz was an eminent writer of the French School, who at the time of the American Revolution was Swedish ambassador in Paris, the senior diplomat at the French capital. He spoke French like a native, exerted great influence in court and cultural circles, kept a literary salon of his own in Paris, and, as it happened, often introduced the American representative in France, Benjamin Franklin, to prominent Frenchmen. It was during the latter part of the eighteenth century, through the efforts of the elegant and culture-loving Gustavus III, that a national Swedish theater and opera were established, including an open-air theater at Drottningholm. That the King was a dramatist in his own right we have already noted.

The Swedish literature of the century, though often didactic in subject-matter, was predominatingly poetic in form, French form generally; but many Swedish poets objected and refused to clothe their feelings or thoughts in rigid French meters. Authors like Thorild and Lidner actively opposed them in their writings. As for topics, we have already pointed out that several independent writers chose both subject and form according to their own inclinations. Such a poet was Fru Nordenflycht, the "sorrowing turtledove," as she has so often been called, who was intensely subjective in her poetically expressed feelings. As for

Bellman, the most original Swedish poet of the Century, he followed no school of taste or form, merely his own inspirations of the moment, generally, in his tavern and drinking songs improvising and combining words with music until they made one harmonious artistic fabric. And his words from *Fredman's Songs* and *Fredman's Epistles*, and melodies of them, "some new: some old," were so closely bound together that they have literally remained inseparable. One without the other is unthinkable. Bellman is Sweden's first great lyric poet, with gaiety, resignation, melancholy, death, and funerals, all immortalized with equal genius. Sometimes the struggling consumptive "troubadour" wrote hymns, probably in the morning after the night before, when he composed his drinking songs in convivial company. His philosophy was old and simple, and is found in two lines of one of his best-known songs, which in a free translation may be rendered:

> Enjoy yourself; drink more, yea more,
> For death is waiting at your door.

From about 1810 to 1830 we have in Sweden the movement generally known as Romanticism, to which we have already referred, with tendencies on the part of writers to stress feeling, religion, imagination, and artistry for its own sake rather than the dry formalism of the French School. Many of our best Swedish lyrics came from this period, and it could boast of a large number of able poets, some young, and sickly, unfortunately. Often, however, the polemical attacks of the Romanticists in the literary journals on the old ideas are far more interesting and certainly more intelligible to read than some of their poetry. Tegnér, and several others, criticised the young group for their obscurantism. A misty expression, he said, presupposed a misty thought. Besides Atterbom's fairy-tale drama *The Island of Bliss* and Tegnér's *Frithiof's Saga,* both published in 1825, the most permanent accomplishment of the Ro-

manticists was the publication in 1816-18, by E. G. Geijer and A. A. Afzelius, of a large collection of Swedish folksongs (folkvisor), which during the Middle Ages and the Reformation Period had originated among the people, and the authors of which were unknown. Of interest to us in America is the work of K. A. Nicander, who met Longfellow in Rome, 1828, and in him awakened an interest in Swedish letters. Later, in 1835, Longfellow, with his family, spent the summer, not too enjoyably, in Sweden. Nicander was the author of a Romantic drama, *The Rune Sword* (Runesvärdet), localized on the borderline between paganism and Christianity. Geijer, an historian, treated in excellent verse such subjects as "The Viking," "The Young Charcoal Burner," and "The Yeoman Farmer"; and Erik Johan Stagnelius, in addition to writing beautiful though often too profound and incomprehensible gnostic verse, wrote poems, dramas, and epics on national themes, like *Blenda,* the heroine of which conquers the Danes in the manner of Judith of Old Testament fame.

The first Swedish poet to become known internationally was, of course, Bishop Tegnér, in *Frithiof's Saga,* a modernized, idealized, romantic epic treatment of an ancient Norwegian tale about Frithiof the Bold, a fictional character. Soon all Europe knew the heroine and heroes of it—Frithiof, Ingeborg, King Ring, and the lovable rascal, the Viking Björn. Tegnér's *Saga* has been translated into German alone about thirty times. Every one of its twenty-four cantos, or "songs," has a different meter—in fact, one has several meters—and many of the songs have been set to music. Also an opera has been based on the saga. The epic, with its stirring adventures and declarations of love, its Viking deeds and background, crimes, near-tragedy, and Christianized Viking philosophy, is still enjoyed by both old and young, but particularly by the young.

After Romanticism, as in the rest of Europe, came realism and more prose writings. The historical novel appears; *Aftonbladet,*

a vigorous modern newspaper, with criticisms of society, makes its debut in 1830; Miss Bremer makes Sweden famous with novels such as *The Home, The Family H - - -*, and *The Neighbors;* and Rydberg becomes a champion of humanistic liberalism, particularly in religion, through the above-mentioned *The Last Athenian* (1859), a novel, the scene of which is laid in Athens in the fourth century, and in which the author's sympathy is definitely with the "arch-pagan" Krysanteus and his daughter Hermione. The narrow-minded Christians in the work play, for the most part, a sorry role. Best known of Rydberg's works is probably *Singoalla,* the romantic story of a knight's love for a Gypsy girl. It has been translated into English. Here we might mention, too, that the late William Widgery Thomas, formerly U. S. Minister to Sweden and Norway and founder of the New Sweden colony in Maine, translated, in 1879, *The Last Athenian* into English.

Many writers in Swedish have been born in Finland. This was the case with Ambassador Creutz, of American Revolutionary fame, who with Franklin signed the first treaty of Sweden with America, 1783. A Swedish bishop of Finnish birth, a poet and prose writer, was F. M. Franzén, who treated both light and serious themes and early became a member of the Swedish Academy. Fredrika Bremer was of Finnish birth. Runeberg, whom we have mentioned, was a Swedish-writing Finnish citizen of international dimensions—certainly one of the greatest Swedish writers of all time. Later came Zakarias Topelius, another Finn, who wrote songs and tales in Swedish, and who was the author of the popular *The Army Surgeon's Stories* (Fältskärns berättelser), dealing with colorful figures in Swedish history, such as Gustavus Adolphus. There were, and are, many other Finnish writers, especially those of Swedish descent, who wrote or write in Swedish.

Realism in European literature developed into or was followed by an extreme form of it, commonly known as Naturalism,

a movement for naked truth and merciless social analyses, which probed the very depths, the lower strata, and often the ugliest parts, of society. The chief exponent of this tendency in Sweden was, of course, Strindberg, the hundredth anniversary of whose birth we are celebrating this year. Naturalism in Sweden may be said to have emerged in 1879 with the publication of *The Red Room*, a novel in which Strindberg begins his attacks on contemporary society. In 1929, by the way, Topsöe-Jensen, a Danish literary historian, called Strindberg "Probably the most noteworthy figure in Northern literature of the last fifty years." In any event, he is Sweden's most stimulating and influential—also the most irritating—literary genius, and her greatest dramatist. *The Red Room* had been preceded by the powerful and now popular *Master Olof* (1872), based nominally on the life of Olaus Petri, the Swedish Reformation hero, and whose philosophy of everything or nothing went back to Ibsen and Kierkegaard. It was followed by several "ultrarealistic products, often pathological, the artistry of which was later discarded by the restless author himself for a series of provocative historical dramas, superb stories of the common people, and works of symbolistic, romantic, or expressionistic character. Strindberg is the personified paradox of changes, contradictions." He was in turn a socialist and an anti-socialist, an atheist and a Christian believer, a Nietzschean superman, a friend of man and a reputed hater of women, a Deist, a Swedenborgian, a scientist, an individualist and a democrat. The variety and quantity of his literary output are enormous; fifty-five volumes at least have been published; yet a vital proportion of his work is one constant, often agonizing confession. His versatility included poetry, but he is much better in prose, and best of all in the drama. He wrote dream plays, short stories, novels, and one-act dramas. Best known of his works are *Married*, 1884-86; *The Son of a Servant*, 1886; *The Father*, 1887; *Miss Julia*, 1888—the latter two plays of violent erotic or domestic passion—*The Dance of Death*, 1901;

The Dream Play, 1902; *The Inferno,* 1913; *To Damascus,* 1898-1904, a drama of "psychic apprehension" and said to be based on Strindberg's conversion, as that of St. Paul in days of old; and *The Spook Sonata,* 1907. Among his seventy dramas are the historical plays that deal with Gustavus Vasa, Erik XIV, Charles XII, and Queen Christina. Whatever we may say or think about Strindberg, we must admit that he was an extraordinary creative genius. He was thrice married, thrice divorced, and five times a father. Readers who think of him mostly as a woman-hater should remember not only that he was three times *divorced* but also, logically, that he was three times *married:* He must have liked some women for a time.

But Sweden, essentially lyric at heart, as we have seen, could not long endure exclusively the fate of sordid realism, even if it was supposed to reveal scientific truth and, indirectly, lead to something better in life. And so about 1890 there came a reaction to the Strindberg Naturalism, called neo-Romanticism and symbolism, which sought to restore imagination and culture on their own merits. In Sweden this opposition was consciously or unconsciously sponsored creatively by Verner von Heidenstam (d. 1940), with his works of Oriental background, nationalism, and Stoic moralism; by the extremely popular Selma Lagerlöf (who, also, passed away in 1940), in her idealistic stories and novels of rare, original charm, which broke definitely with Naturalism and what philosophers call positivism; and by Gustav Fröding, Sweden's greatest poet, the undisputed master of meter, rhythm, and felicitous expression. Also, the leading Swedish critic Oscar Levertin (d. 1906) and the post-Romanticist and secretary of the Swedish Academy C. D. af Wirsén (d. 1912) favored the reaction from the unpleasant, not to say lurid, realms of literature. The Romantic revival takes various forms: in Levertin it is a particular type of estheticism, dealing with different forms of beauty; with Ola Hansson of Skåne it is symbolism and mysticism; with Ekelund, another

Skåne poet, Hellenism, i.e. enthusiasm for ancient Greece; and by this time Strindberg himself had changed his theories and we have expressionism. One phase of modern Swedish literature is clear, brilliant: Provincialism. Miss Lagerlöf writes about her native province Värmland, and Karlfeldt, a pure lyricist and posthumous Nobel-Prize winner, about Dalecarlia. Other writers localized their work in other native provinces.

With masterpieces like *Gösta Berlings Saga, Mårbacka, Jerusalem,* and *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils,* Miss Lagerlöf is probably, in foreign lands, the most popular in all circles, of all time, of all Scandinavian writers, except Hans Christian Andersen, the Danish author of fairy tales. Academic specialists will, presumably, among all Scandinavian writers, place Ibsen, Brandes, Strindberg first. Miss Lagerlöf's writings are edifying, wholesome, pleasantly moralizing; you feel cleaner, esthetically and ethically, when you have finished one of her stories. Undoubtedly the greatest as well as the best known of Heidenstam's productions is *The Charles Men* (Karolinerna), a national, tragic epos of Sweden which deals with the heroically suffering soldiers of Charles XII, led not to glamorous victory but to glory in defeat.

In bringing this brief survey to a close, we must mention—and that is all that we have time for—a few more names. Noted successors to Strindberg in the Naturalistic vein were Gustaf af Geijerstam and Viktoria Benediktsson; Tor Hedberg wrote (1886) a soul-analyzing novel, *Judas,* and in 1907 a fine political drama *Johan Ulfstjerna.* In the meantime, Per Hallström had, like Hjalmar Söderberg, become a master of the short story; the late Elin Wägner, who like Vilhelm Moberg, localized her novels in the province of Småland, had become a member of the Swedish Academy, the second woman to be so honored; K. J. Ossiannilsson had both in verse and prose championed social democracy; Hjalmar Bergman produced successful novels and plays; Olof Högberg wrote, 1906, a monumental historical novel of the Norrland region—more provincialism—called *The Great*

Wrath; Pär Lagerkvist penned metaphysical symbol poetry and wrote strange plays with new dramatic functions for imagination; and Ernst Didring (d. 1931) created a significant novel trilogy *Ore* (Malm, 1914-19), describing the building of the Lapland railway to the Norwegian border. Today scores of Swedish and Swedish-Finnish writers treat of every topic imaginable, in verse and prose, and among the creative intellects is a large proportion of professional critics, journalists, and historians. In 1917 C. W. Stork, in his *Anthology of Swedish Lyrics,* included forty-five poets. Since then several more of quality have emerged, though we shall have to omit them here.

In the history of world literature the contribution from Sweden occupies, proportionately, a distinctive place. It has proved versatile and realistic. Despite its sensitiveness to foreign influences, its cosmopolitanism, it has maintained, basically, a national independence. Both quantity and quality are impressive. Religion, science, world affairs, and modern industry have played an integral part in its development. But, above all, Swedish literature, whether written in a lighter or more serious vein, is predominantly lyrical.

BOGDAN RADITSA

The Concept of Freedom and Rebellion in the Literatures of the Yugoslavs

If I was asked what is the meaning of the Yugoslav literatures, I would answer that in order to understand this question one has to know first what is the meaning the Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes give to their concept of life. Every literature to be creative and alive must reflect the relations of its peoples toward life, the fundamental principles, and even the tragic sense that make the life worth living and suffering.

What is then the concept of life among the Yugoslavs? It is their enduring search for freedom through rebellion. What is their approach toward history? If the essence of history is the search for freedom, these peoples have sung through their lives their most monumental epics. Their major poets, national and individual, sensed that meaning. This is why together with their peoples they live in history.

This answer would not be clear if the fundamentals upon which this philosophy is elaborated are not further explained. Our people believe, that in order to live, to exist, and to survive, man must be free. Life and death achieve true meaning only when man is free. In these peoples' outlook everything must be sacrificed to freedom, *Sloboda*, as it is called by the Serbs and Croats, *Svoboda* by the Slovenes. History itself has no meaning unless freedom is attained. Yet freedom without justice, *Pravda* in Serbian and Croatian, *Pravica* in Slovenian, is worthless. Therefore our peoples' philosophy does not divide freedom from justice. They are part of the same majestic and dignified creed, the kernel of our peoples' whole existence.

These concepts of freedom and justice are not necessarily political, social, and economic. As the great observer of individuals and nations, Miguel de Unamuno, wrote after having read our major literary works, "The southern Slavs have succeeded to express the only possible meaning of justice. Justice for them is a mean by which the soul has the power to free itself. Thus justice becomes eternal, personal, and religious and not the shadow of justice."[1] Ascetic, noble, and simple, their ethics permeated with the spirit of justice and freedom, our peoples; the more they have been deprived of that freedom, the more they have been consistent in their quest for it and have cherished it as their highest ideal. They have preferred death in the open field rather than life in the darkness of forsaken principles. Hence, rebellion is for them a necessary movement of life and cannot be avoided if one wants to exist. Rebellion, which is nothing else but the century-old will to refuse to be subjugated by currents and pressures alien to us, is the basis of our peoples' struggle to achieve a life in justice and freedom. Such rebellion as the source of the real life keeps us constantly awakened in the stormy and flexible change of history. Rebellion makes our people firmly believe that even through death they will receive their gift of life.

Yet, this is not because they do not love life, nihilism is by no means their way of life. On the contrary, no people in the world enjoy life more. The land, so impressively beautiful and often so benignant to man, is certainly not an inspirer of death as most of the travelers from the West can attest. Everywhere in the mountains and in the valleys, along the rivers and along the shores of this rebellious land of ours, where West and East have met and disagreed, fought and conquered for centuries, life has triumphantly fought death. As Rebecca West wrote in *Black Lamb and Gray Falcon,* "The country is always telling me about

[1] Miguel de Unamuno, excerpts from the "Susreti sa Miguelom de Unamunom," Bogdan Radica, *Agonija Evrope* (Beograd, 1940), p. 481.

one death or another . . . Yet this country is full of life. I feel that we westerners should come here to learn to live. But perhaps we are ignorant about life in the West, because we avoid thinking about death."[2]

These values and ideals have been expressed by the three poets I have chosen to speak about tonight. Njegoš, Mažuranić, and Prešeren have expressed this philosophy in their major works. As men and as writers they had a mission to accomplish. They had to break with the old traditions and rules in making the choice for their inspirations, their languages, and forms. They had to escape from cold academic Scholasticism and dull classicism. They had a major problem to solve.

In the case of the Serbian, Croatian, and Slovenian literatures, as in their national lives there was no unity. Their cultural backgrounds were altogether different. While the Croats and the Slovenes had their cultural developments integrated with the West, the Serbians were outlined through the Byzantine pattern. Yet in the nineteenth century the so-called Slavic Renaissance reverberates in three cultural centers the same echo: *to achieve self-determination of the three nations through the self-expression of their literary endeavors.* Academies and foreign examples are no longer used as means of expression by our writers. The sources of inspiration become the people—their life and their languages. This is why in Serbia and in Croatia, Njegoš and Mažuranić, and in Slovenia, Prešeren, accomplished their major tasks with courage and determination and opened a way for later generations, which never abandoned their example. The values – freedom and justice—they sang in their poems as they reflected the major creeds of our peoples' way of life, measured with eternity, acquired a lasting place in our cultures. This is why even today whenever our peoples are

[2]Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Gray Falcon, a Journey Through Yugoslavia* (New York, Viking Press, 1940), II, 917.

faced with major obstacles they look toward them with gratitude and devotion.

Njegoš, Mažuranić, and Prešeren lived in a century which was pregnant with great expectations in all directions. Hearts everywhere were burning with hope and ambitions for individuals and nations to achieve themselves in history. The Romantic upsurge at the outset of the French Revolution after the Napoleonic Wars had awakened the lands of Illyria and was searching for new and fresh images. Victor Hugo and Lord Byron dreamed and welcomed the resurrection of the small peoples in the Balkans. Lamartine and Merimée tried to give significance to many geographic expressions in southern Europe. Goethe, convinced that the world was rapidly moving toward unity, felt that world literature would lose something if it could not be enriched by the jewels from the old Serb and Croat ballads and, therefore, gave them a prominent place in his anthology of *World Poetry*. Njegoš, Mažuranić, and Prešeren are the children of this same century whose restless Promethean drama they expressed in their poems, thus uniting our little and unknown world with the destiny of mankind.

I

The first to sing of the inexorable drive of the Christian south Slavs on their painful road toward the conquest of freedom was the great Montenegrin Prince Bishop, Peter II, Petrovic Njegoš.

This tall and slender heir to one of the last European theocracies was perhaps the only learned man in his brave country where freedom was preserved at terrible cost in blood, while the rest of the Balkans was still under the Turkish yoke. A frequent visitor of Russia and the West, Italy and Austria, he was under the impact of the Romantic upsurge. Yet while abroad he

always felt very lonesome and thought of himself as a stranger among the great souls of his time. Though essentially a romantic even to the point of being attained by the "sickness of the century" *(la maladie du siecle),* he never lost sight of the destiny of his unfortunate people. Thoroughly convinced that his people could not survive Turkish slavery unless the West and the East met somewhere on the crossroad of the two civilizations, he will knock on the doors of the great powers' chanceries in Vienna and in Petrograd to beg in his people favor. Everywhere he will encounter frustration and disappointment. The nineteenth century, the century of unlimited expectations and conflicts, is reflected in his life and his work. He and his people are too small to avoid or to resist the universal drama.

The village of Njeguši in Montenegro, where he was born in 1813 and from where he took his pen name, was the last bulwark of free Christianity in a world of slavery. As his hero in his main work the *Gorski Vijenac* ("The Mountain Wreath"), Bishop Danilo says:

> The dark Mountains echo lamentations
> Above a world of travail (even) God keeps silent

and desperately asks:

> Oh, had we bretern somewhere in the world
> To weep for us (and to offer us) some kindly aid.

The world in which Njegoš lived is significantly described by an acute French observer who visited Montenegro in those years as Napoleon's emissary. The Colonel Vialla de Sommières left us the following picture of the people:

> The civilization of Europe did not penetrate over here. They live in a state very near to the nature. One of the chief traits of the people from these mountains is their alikeness with the Scythians of which we have heard high praises for their noble deeds and their frankness

and their caustic talks. Everybody knows the speech, short and firm, that the Scythians made to Darius' generals who wanted to subjugate them. The Montenegrins would have used the same words. When they were admitted to the Pasha councils they spoke their mind clearly, they spoke with the assurance pertaining to the right, the reason, and the sentiments of a free people which cannot accept being offended.[3]

This is the spirit that enhances The Mountain Wreath. Heroism here is honor and it is a name that must never be sullied. *Čojstvo i Junaštvo* means honesty, integrity that goes closely together with heroism. One cannot be a hero unless he is not at the same time honest and a full human being. Thus, the heroic deeds sprang only from integrity and honesty imbued with Christian ethics. In the name of these values which inspired their forefathers to give their lives so that the West could live and work in happiness and prosperity, these brave Montenegrins, who have kept memories alive, burn to try again.

The scene of this great drama is rugged Montenegro, the Black Mountain at the end of the seventeenth century when the rest of the world was happily relieved of the Moslem threat, safely contained by the resistance of the southern Slavs. Yet here, everywhere, there is threat, the land is not a prey of a major enemy and the aloofness of the world at large, but also heavily divided internally among the followers of Christ and those of the Crescent. The threat of a fratricidal war might destroy the last hope of survival. The world afar seems to these Montenegrins no more than a complex of infernal discord.

It is a dead hour of the night. All the people are asleep while the leaders of the clans and tribes are gathered. Their mission is to work out a final rebellion against the tyranny and throw the Moslems out of their land. The poem echoes the lost battles for freedom. Yet Mount Lovchen is there rising like a deter-

[3] M. le Colonel L. V. Vialla de Sommieres, *Voyages Historiques au Montenegro* (Paris, Alexis Eymert, 1820), II, 153-154.

mined rebel from the blue gulf of Kotor at the southern limit of the Dalmatian coast. The contrast between the calm beauty of the Adriatic and the rustic, eastern bareness of Montenegro is both inspiring and upsetting. One of the wise men in the assembly, the old priest, paints an appalling picture of the world as it will very soon emerge from the reality.

The world, as he sees it, is basically divided on bristling beliefs clashing among them. Nation strives against nation. The man insurges against other man. The day struggles with night—the flesh with the soul. The spirit of darkness is constantly confusing the light of the soul. The soul never attains equal repose in the flesh. Yet the power of the spirit is the only one that may free men from basic contradictions in our existence.

Thus, unlike Kierkegaard and Sartre, the modern existentialists, Njegoš will discover, through the storms of his personal life and the tragedy of his people constantly crucified between the West and the East, that man can reach harmony only in the rebellion against the dark tyrant which dwells in ourselves and in the external world. This is why "the oppressed must rise against the oppressor." Njegoš believes that one must "do what looks impossible" in order to survive.

Like all true Christians and true men, Njegoš tortures us with his essential question "What would we do with a life which would not endure its tragic sense?"

Yet, what is the reality in which he has to live and act. Like a grim biblical prophet weeping upon the ruins of his world, Njegoš sees his "people sleep a deadly sleep."

Moje pleme snom mrtvijem spava
suza moja nema roditelja
nada mnom je nebo zatvoreno,
ne prima mi ni plača ni molitve,
u ad mi se svijet pretvorio,
a svi ljudi pakleni duhovi
Crni dane, a crna sudbino!

(I see my people sleep a deadly sleep
No Parents' hand to wipe away my tears;
God's heaven is shut upon my head,
Giving no answer to my cries and prayers.
This world is now become an inferno
And men but demons in disguise,
Oh, dark dark day! Oh, outlook ever black!
My fearing folk held ever underfoot!)

Against this dark perspective, Njegoš reaffirms that in order to exist one must act, one must struggle. Unlike the western Machiavellians and unlike the Russian nihilists, this Montenegrin poet and popular leader felt with as much depth as his people that life and death only attain true meaning with the achievement of justice. Rebellion becomes not only legitimate but even sacred. Those who cannot meet happiness and contentment either in God or in action are destined to perish. This is why he repeats that "our world awakes the human will" and "our actions" must coherently spring from "our thoughts." Men must continue to defend themselves from a "force that may break loose." It is perhaps this inner force which pushed Njegoš to make, through his poem, his call to his bleeding people to prepare for final and fateful strike. The force that calls upon the Montenegrins to accomplish glorious deeds as told by the hero, Bishop Danilo asks to:

Strike for the Cross! Strike for the heroic name . . .
Strike for freedom and justice . . .
For Christ holy Name . . .

The struggle in Njegoš' terms must be merciless. "Let it thus be or never be at all." Man must not only defend his wife and his child but the "Altar and the Heart and the Honour" of his people, so close is life bound to the ideals of justice and freedom. Each generation must bear its burden, and Njegoš tells us against all odds that his generation was "created to be sung!" It will never

die, he repeats, as only immortal and "happy are those who live for ever; they had a reason for being born!" Through sufferings and holocausts can the soul learn the spirit of the cross and find its ever new reality. Through trials of a tempered soul, man finds not only hope but "bonds with Heaven."

Nothing could stop man from his struggle for freedom through self-expressed personalism. But man must feel free before the struggle begins. This is why Njegoš asks to chase "from our fold the leper" and "to baptise the enemy with water or with blood." True life can resurrect only from a "blood-stained stone."

The Montenegrins will accomplish this new mission. They will free the land from the crescent. Likewise in the Greek tragedy, the chorus here *Kolo* on a field dampened with blood mourns a "lost right hand," a son, a brother, a father—"all bright and clean as mirrors." By their death, a life all anew arises so that in a century darkened with skepticism, Njegoš may convince us that:

> Freedom and Justice—Honour and Hope shall both resurgent be
> There where does burn Christ fragrant incense free . . .

II

In the middle of the nineteenth century when Europe was undergoing an era of restoration and many social, national, and political questions demanded solutions; the Eastern question became most momentous. Ban Ivan Mažuranić worked hard in the heart of Croatia, in Zagreb, to build a center of culture which ought to make the southern Slavs known in the West, according to the ideas of the Illyrian movement. At that time the Croats were greatly impressed with the struggle for freedom of the Montenegrins and Serbs. So it came natural for their great statesman and poet, Ban Mažuranić, to turn his mind to Montenegro that "nest of freedom quest," and place there his major poetic work written in a language that both Croats and Serbs

could read and understand, the *Smrt Smail-Age Čengjića, The Death of Smail-Aga.*

Ivan Mažuranić, born in 1814, was the founder of an illustrious Croatian family which has given the Croatian nation generations of poets, writers, lawgivers, and statesmen. After the 1848 Revolution he lost hope that the Croats could attain their national self-determination in the Habsburgh Empire. This is why he decided to devote his life to awaken the West and his own people to the unjustly forgotten cause of the sacrificed Christian Slavs.

It was not difficult for Ban Mažuranić to sense what were and had been the sufferings of the southern Slavs in the Balkans. The whole Croatian literature before him has reflected the cry of those peoples' unceasing struggle for freedom. The Croatian poets living in comfort in the flourishing culture of the Adriatic cities were constantly moved by what they saw and heard from refugees fleeing the Ottoman persecutions. Already in 1501 Marko Marulić, a patrician from Split, had published a poem, "Judita," where he asks for a saintly woman who, like the one in the Bible, could behead the tyrant Olophernus and free the Christians. Though having written his major work in Latin, which had been widely read by the nobility in Venice, Paris, and Salamanca, Marulić wrote his poem "in Croatian verses" thus opening the way for all writers in later years to express themselves in their native language.

Marulić addressed a letter to the Roman Pope Hadrian VI in which he draws the following picture of that struggle, giving us a sad preview of the turmoils in his time: "The many tears and the sad grim faces of those who every day take refuge with us pushed the pen in my hands . . . The enemy already thinks that the remnant of the Christian World will abandon Christ to bow to the prophet . . ." Marulić goes on to say that if Illyria and Pannonia fall, the land between the Drava and the Sava, if Belgrade falls, what will remain of the Christian world? "Believe

me that the whole Christianity is nearing its end," he stresses, "if all of us do not unite and in the name of Jesus prefer death rather than serve this barbarian miscreed." The West, Italy, and Germany are in danger unless this Kingdom of Pannonia is protected.

> The enemy will destroy Illyria and then be able to subjugate all other Christian people. The common enemy should be rejected with a common army. No one should think he is far enough from the enemy. If the fire is not extinguished soon it will spread and destroy everything until the end of the world. None can rely upon his own strength alone. The enemy is the strongest when we are divided. Many kingdoms should unite and rise against the enemy, yet our kings do not care. Now the Spaniards are fighting against the French, the Italians are disunited among themselves and thus hating each other they call upon themselves God's wrath.[4]

Together with Marulić, Ivan Mažuranić discovered Ivan Gundulić, another Croatian poet from Dubrovnik (Ragusa), who left an unfinished poem "Osman," which dealt with the same problem, the Slavs from Poland to the Adriatic should unite in rejecting the Turk slavery. Dubrovnik and a few Croatian cities on the Adriatic were the only islands of freedom. It was there where the conquered *raya* from the mainland often asked refuge and hope. This is why he will leave us the most unforgettable verses singing freedom:

> O lijepa, o draga, o slatko Slobodo,
> dar u kom sva blaga višnji nam Bog je do . . .
> Uzroče istini od naše sve slave,
> uresu jedini od ove Dubrave.
> Sva srebra, sva zlata, svi ljudski životi
> nemogu biti plata tvojoj čistoj ljepoti.

[4]Domini Marci Maruli Spalatensis Ad Adrianum VI Pont. Max De Calamitatibus occurentibus et exhortatio ad communem omnium Christianorum unionem et pacem (Romae, 1552), Quoted from Marko Marulic, Zivot i djela, napisao Petar Kasandric. (Zagreb, Matice Hrvatske, 1901), pp. 46-47.

(Oh dearest, sweet, oh beautiful freedom
Gift in which God all wealth hath given,
Cause of the truth of all our glory
Sole gem of this beautiful Dubrava.
All silver, all gold, all human lives
Cannot buy your pure beauty.)

It is Gundulić's poem that Mažuranić found unfinished and understandingly, lovingly, three hundred years later, finished it in the true, popular tradition. It was this spirit that brought Mažuranić to compose his *Death of Smail-Aga*, the classic of the Croatian literature. His central figure is not only the Smail-Aga, the Turkish tyrant who terrifies the people of Montenegro and Hezegovina, but Novica, the young Montenegrin hero who, together with a handful of anonymous braves, took revenge on the Turkish persecutions of Christians. The dreadful aga is preparing the last massacre of the *raya* using the forceful taxation and levy. A handful of brave Montenegrins decide during the night to avenge, and they plot to kill the aga. Here in verses, inspired with true religious and patriotic feelings, aware of a sacrificed humanity, Mažuranić expresses the spirit prevailing that night:

Each of them will gladly die
For the honored Cross, his dear baptismal sign,
For the Cross of Honor, and for Freedom Gold.

Mažuranić's heroes are noble and dignified souls, "knightly saints," who rebel against oppression. Their inner life is inspired by the ideals of faith and fatherland. Like in the men of Njegoš and in the folk ballads, in Mažuranić's heroes we find the same acceptance of a certain set of values, heroism, honor, and the superiority of freedom and justice even over individual life. In Mažuranić words these ideals are, "The Honored Cross" and the "Freedom Gold." His men die for them, *Za Krst časni i Slobodu zlatnu* ("for the honored Cross and freedom gold.")

The poet tells us that his men, while going on toward death, are not selected "for their beauty" but "for their heroic heart" *(srce junačko).* When they will die "their pierced bodies" will not shake, "neither shriek not cry, no groan, no grinding of the teeth" only:

> At times they call the Eternal Lord
> Or murmur Jesus' lovely name,
> Then lightly bid the sun good-bye
> Defending their fair faith
> Thus accustomed they do die.

Mažuranić in a few striking words, delineates the real strength of these peoples.

> Boj se onog ko je viko
> Bez golema mrijeti jada!

> (Fear that one who accustome is to die
> With lightsome heart!)

To avoid every misunderstanding on the subject of life and death, Mažuranić formulates the meaning of the sacrifice. His men die satisfied for they are the true martyrs for the Christian faith. They die for they know "the Eternal Justice," for which they kill, too, will be redeemed and achieved. In the mind of our people something which is unjust, even if successful, is never good. This is why the handful of brave Montenegrins before they go to avenge the *raya* and kill the tyrant know that this deed is an imperative of justice. Before going to take vengeance, Mažuranić's *cheta* communicates with the Almighty. On top of a hill turning their eyes toward the "golden sinking sun," they do it. They have nothing dearer in the whole world than this humble place high up in the rugged mountain where "eagle weaves his nest—since freedom can vainly be searched in the enslaved plains." Their "holy altar" are the hills and valleys.

The incense . . . rises the perfume
From herb and flower and all the sunlit world
Of martyr blood outpoured for the Cross.

The man who gives them strength is a "true servant of Truer Master." In the words which will never be forgotten in our tongue, the priest expresses the reason for such sacrifice:

Djeco moja, hrabri zatočnici!
Vas je ova zemlja porodila,
Kršovita, ali vama zlatna
Djedi vaši rodiše se tudijer,
Oci vasi rodiše se tudijer
I vi isti rodiste se tudijer:
Za vas ljepše u svjetu neima.

(Children mine brave avengers,
For this land which gave you light
Rugged it is, but to you golden,
For here were all your ancestors born,
Your father too, they were born here,
And you yourselves, here, too were born;
For you no sweeter place in all the world.)

But a far superior meaning to this sacrifice, Mažuranić will give in these verses:

That Cross imparting comfort mid all tears.
Gift of God's grace, and lasting strength for fleeting years.

Inspired by the strength received from their faith in God, the brave warriors went on to accomplish their ultimate task—the destruction of Smail-Aga, the tyrant.

Having been educated a westerner, Mažuranić was afraid that such sacrifice might be sophisticately received in other lands where people were living under luckier conditions. This is why he pathetically asks the West to give more attention to this tragedy. Like a tide with wind constantly whistling against it, this land has been beaten up by opposing races and their cul-

tures. He knew that all of our literature from the folk poetry to the artistic creations had been dashed about in this heavy sea of conflicting currents, and he knew that these waves subjugated us whether this was their end or not and retarded the molding of our true personality.

This is why Mažuranić rejects forcefully the idea so commonly held in the West that all these sacrifices were penalty for earlier laxness and errors and even acquiescence toward tyrannies. Mažuranić sees his time as the right time to rise up and tell the world that here in this land, on these rocks, the monstrous tyrant breaks his teeth where people in truth become true avengers of God's own "righteous wrath." Irritated with the ignorance of the West, that sits idly and folds its hands and even calls these people "barbarians," while they gave their lives "bearing all the sorrow for the Cross while other slept in shame." It took a major courage to stress this point against a prejudice that since has been revenged but not completely forgotten . . .

Mažuranić's work is not only historically important because it records the struggle of a small people faced with annihilation defending the principles of Christianity as the principles of their existence. By the fact that Mažuranić made the decision to express himself in the language spoken by the people, the Croats and the Serbs, he saw that our individuality of culture and spirit could be built on domestic ground.

This is why Mažuranić's poem was greeted with enthusiasm and recognition by both the contemporary Croats and Serbs. The Serbian linguist Vuk Karadžić pointed out that "nobody in the world could have sung it better." The Croatian esthete, Franjo Markovic, stated: "Our four century struggle in the Balkans for faith and freedom has at last found its Homer."

Thus the language and the motives expressed by the popular poetry helped the generation of the nineteenth century to begin that great literary period, we call the national renaissance—when the writer associates himself with the people thus be-

coming his most important voice. Much more he sees himself as the rallying point where national ideals could agree on essential creeds of peoples' existence. This was the task the followers of the Illyrian movement wanted to accomplish among the Yugoslavs with all their hearts and their minds. Mažuranić left forever in his work the best document of that noble effort showing the people and the West our cultural and national maturity.

III

My friends, the vineyard yields again,
And good juice from the vine
Will kindle the blood in the vein
And sweeten the eyes' sharp brine.
    Let's drown our cares
    And wild despairs
In fragrant floods of flowing wine.

My brothers, raise your glass in hand!
To whom shall we drink this toast!
To ourselves and our own dear land.
    Sister and brother
    Let's all foregather
Daughters and sons of a glorious mother.

Spet trite so rodile
prijat'lji vince nam sladkó
    Ki nam oživlja žile,
    srčé razjasni in oko
    ki vtopi
    vse skrbi
v pocrtih prsih up budi!

Komú najpred veselo
zdravljico, bratje, č'mo zapet?
    Bog našo nam deželo
    Bog živi ves slovenski svet,
    brate vse
    kar nas je
sinov sloveče matere.

The melody and the accord here are different. The author is the great Slovenian lyricist, France Prešeren, the poet of freedom, brotherhood, and love.

Prešeren, born in 1800 in Vrba, is the child of the same romantic upsurge from which our other poets came, the Slav Renaissance, but he is less tragic and more hopeful. The nature of his postulate is on a different level. He is the representative of a people who are determined to assert themselves through cultural self-expression. The world in which Dr. Prešeren tried to be heard was that of the Holy Alliance, between Napoleon's death and the Revolution of March, 1848. The police regime of declining absolutism oppressed the minds of the liberals. The Slovenes had to overcome major cultural obstacles. Threatened by the rising Germanism, they were faced with the danger to disappear as a nation. Prešeren felt this oppression in his whole life as a poet, as a son of his peasant stock, as a small white collar, and, later on, as a lawyer. Everywhere he was beaten up. A delicate and fine soul, he had the stamina to respond to the most decisive call of the century—be oneself. The Romantic poets of the West helped him to find that personal inner liberation which was permeating the revolutionary spirits of a restlessly growing century.

He was confronted with immense tasks—no model or pattern to follow at home, aloofness of his literary friends and scholars, and omnipresent censorship that oppressed the mind. Njegoš had before him the folk poetry. Mažuranić had it too and also the old Croatian poets who had prepared the way for him. Both of them had to complete and achieve the synthesis in content and in form. Prešeren had very little behind him; classicism was nonexistent, and what of it was cold and inexpressive. The prosody was bleak, inarticulate. Yet Prešeren felt that he had to sing for his people a *canto nuovo* ("a new song.") He did succeed. His 150 poems, ballads, sonnets, romances, and many other forms are a vivid, brilliant, and marvellous achievement. He

brought out a complete picture of the Slovenian national, political, and cultural life through verses, epigrams, and satirical poems. The prosody and the rhythm became genuine, fresh, and sparkling. The soul of the people was preserved to the point that even the humble could revive their existence through his verses. He prepared a path easy to follow.

Due to his pioneering, the Slovenian literature grew strong. Toward the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the Slovenian culture was one of the most outstanding in Central Europe. One Ivan Cankar, through an impressive number of powerful novels and stories, brought Prešeren's announcement to high level. All of them confirmed Prešeren's main creed—a nation in order to exist must forge a cultural personality. They recall with satisfaction Prešeren's words:

> It's your turn now; the toast is yours
> Lads of the Slovene hills!
> You are the guardians of our doors:
> Keep stout hearts free from ills
> For the time will come
> To raise the alarm
> And defend our ancient home.

Essentially, Prešeren was a poet of a people faced with the destiny of survival. This is why the major part of his work is absorbed by the Slovenian reality. Yet this poetry has known other inspirations: an unhappy love made his life bleed. His lyricism had to find sweet and mild expressions. And when Byron was too demoniac for him, he met the Italian Petrarca whose impact was strong on him. Yet Prešeren never betrayed himself and the nature of his peoples' soul. In that sentimental and dreamy world of the Slovenian and Croatian Illyrians who felt that the future couldn't be but good, Prešeren lyricism will live forever. His women are sweet even when cruel. Heroism was not of his taste; love could accomplish more than the sword.

Yet that was a parenthesis of his life. The events were running fast toward the future. The Holy Alliance was on the wane. But while 1848 was a year of hope, the after year saw the Austrian Empire go back to the old pattern. The Slovenes together with other Slavs had to undergo new humiliations, subjugations, and nonrecognitions. We find then Dr. France Prešeren busy writing petitions and protests in defense of national rights. In one of his poems, "The Cross on Savica" *(Krst pri Savici),* Prešeren sees a forlorn Slovenian land, old columns lying on the ground, on the land the Germans rule, under dark yoke the sons of Slavs yearn, in Slovenia, happiness shines only for strangers.

His poem "Toast" expresses the same feeling. It had been written on the eve of the March Revolution (1844) and published after Metternich left Vienna. The poem was hidden from the censors for four years because of his outright revolutionary character. The poem assures Prešeren a leading position among his people, and even the Croats later took it as their own.

The poem is a revolutionary manifesto in which a whole generation of poets and writers show his distaste for nationalism as a destructive force. They believe that people must first be free to become a part of the free world. Prešeren sings:

> May crooked lightinings from the sky
> drive all our enemies away.
> So we at last may live and die
> Free men as in our fathers day.

Later the poet asks for:

> The blessings of concord and peace
> shall return to this land,
> and children of glory and grace
> again walk hand in hand.
> The land shall be ours
> its fields and its flowers.

This poem has a major importance, it reveals Prešeren as a patriot as well as a man to whom chauvinism and hostility to-

ward other people is unthinkable. The sole liberation of the Slovenian people was not Prešeren's only goal. Being one of the highly progressive minds of his time, Prešeren, like all true patriots who knew the essential meaning of the French Revolution, knew that a small people to remain free must live in a world where other people are free and equal. The idea of brotherhood among the people of Europe was in Prešeren's mind as popular as in the minds of all great Europeans. Prešeren believed as Giuseppe Mazzini of the Young Italy and of the Young Europe (he was suspected to be one of the Carbonari), that only through unity and brotherhood of all the peoples, Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia could live and flourish.

This is when he turns his eyes from Slovenia and south Slav reality and addresses the "Toast" to the people of the world in a brotherhood of free men and nations.

> Long live all nations of the earth
> Which work for a world of peace!
> Where wandering suns have second birth
> May strife and slavery cease!
> Free men by right
> We'll all unite
> In friendship....

This picture of our major literary strivings in the nineteenth century would not be complete if we do not stress the significance of Ivan Meštrović's great creative accomplishment through his impressive sculptures. In marble, in stone, in wood, and, astonishingly enough, often in words, Meštrović has created a synthesis of the ideas and values expressed in the folk poetry and by the great poets we just spoke about.

In the beginning of this century, Meštrović had brought to a conclusion the great period we have outlined. A product of this romantic upheaval, this amazing genius of ours through his own interpretation of our peoples' philosophy has closed the circle. He was born in that part of our land, on the Croatian mainland

of the Adriatic coast where people have lived for centuries in the great tradition of heroism and bravery, justice and freedom, permeated with Christian ethics, downtrodden and unknown to the outside world. As a young shepherd in our rugged mountains, he heard the message of the popular poetry, their epic ballads and lyric cadences, their fairy tales and their wisdom through their sayings and axioms. He later translated that inspiration of sufferings and hopes, that tragic sense of life, into his plastic and dynamic art. Thanks to his artistic achievement and his monumental expressions, the West finally visualized that philosophy expressed earlier in hardly understandable words. All the translations, perfect they were, could not reach the goal, impress the people at large, as Meštrović's works of art did at the very moment when romantic illusions and hopes seem to become a reality. Thus Meštrović as an interpreter to the West and to his own peoples of the folk poetry and of the great poets we have spoken about, has given a conclusion to the essential values of our life and our culture.

What Meštrović felt he said in explaining his monumental work, *The Temple of Kossovo,* to commemorate glorious deeds of generations of men and women fighting and dying for freedom and justice. Meštrović's Kossovo Temple is more than a national temple, it is a Temple dedicated to mankind where all men together and all nations are singing the hymn to freedom, harmony, and justice. As Njegoš, Mažuranić, and Prešeren, Meštrović thought together with his generation about a social order which would be better than the present, about an order where people would not be subjugated either from within or from without by inimical pressures, where there would be no race superior to another, no tyrannical powers, and where might is not right but justice and love for mankind would reign. He wanted his fatherland to be equal to others in a united world. This is what he himself wrote at the outset of World War I when the hopes of his generation were at its highest.

The Kossovo Temple is the temple of the religion of sacrifice, and the preaching from its pulpit should tell that men must live for justice, for truth and for these ideals be ready to die.

The priest of the Temple is the blind wanderer who goes around the Earth looking for the eternal empire, and sees that all men are brothers, all truths are only part of the one great truth, all Churches only flames burning to the glory of one eternal light, shining over all the others.

The foundations of the temple are the limitless sacrifices of our human race. Joined to them, are all those who are heavily burdened, who suffer and endure.

Their litany is the song of the human sorrow, the shade of the temple is love, its holy water the tears of humiliation and desire for justice. The tower of the temple is made of purified souls who link it to the skies. Its bell is the great voice which says: "Live in peace and love mankind and with it all the creation of God." "Go forward without stopping toward greater perfection that you may become like Him—and he is infinite."

* * * * * *

Let us for a moment turn our thought to the times, more than a hundred years ago, when these men were dreaming and struggling in the midst of their peoples just making a start at expressing themselves. Let us sum up, through our present experience, their ideas and thought and come to some conclusions.

The great romantic upheaval through the stern realism of our century has come to an end. The unlimited Promethean rebellion, in which Njegoš, Mažuranić, and Prešeren believed and with which they fired the imagination of their people, has brought cultures and nations, at least in Europe, to a deadlock of nihilism and existentialism which deny the worthiness of life itself. The misery of today in Western Europe, as one of the major French intellectuals put it, is that Europe has lost the taste for life and existence. The impulsive Promethean projection into the future, which chiefly believed that men, that frail existence, as

Njegoš said, could replace transcendental forces, has brought this generation of ours in a deadly impassé. Njegoš, Mažuranić, and Prešeren as well as Hugo, Byron, or Goethe were not responsible for this ominous development. They told us that through rebellion we could achieve freedom and justice, but they repeated over and over again that in order to be free one must find response in God or in History. Today the men in rebellion refuse to find freedom in God or in History. And, as Albert Camus wrote, lately, in order to exist one must be free oneself through God or through history.[5] This seems to be the only means to get away from nihilism. The men, sung by Njegoš and Mažuranić, have died accomplishing great deeds because they knew that while dying for Christ, freedom, honor, and justice, one lives forever. This is why we, the Croats, the Serbs, the Slovenes, and, as Prešeren said, all other free men on earth must get away from the present crippling darkness above nihilism in the search of that great light that can only give us the answer and the sustainment for our existence as free men.

A POSTIL

The present-day reader, after having read this lecture, will express his doubts about why I have omitted the more recent opinions expressed by the Yugoslav critics dealing with Njegoš, Mažuranić, and Prešeren.

This presentation of the three nineteenth-century classics aimed to remain essentially faithful to the intentions of the three poets because it was for the first time that they have been introduced before a little-informed audience anxious to have an authentic idea about their main works and ideas; and I had the feeling that the more they are located in their time and in their *milieu*, they are going to be more expressive to our time.

Yet one must at least mention here what was the most recent destiny of the three poets in their country's literary history and

[5] Albert Camus, *L'Homme Revolte* (Paris, NRF Gallimard, 1951), pp. 373-378.

criticism: what is the attitude of the present Yugoslav writers and intelligentsia toward them?

During World War II, Njegoš and Prešeren have been earnestly praised by the traditionalists as well as by the marxists in Slovenia and in Serbia, while Mažuranić was rather kept under silence in Croatia both by the ultranationalists and the marxists. In the National Liberation War the Partisans in Montenegro and in Slovenia stressed the predicaments of Njegoš and Prešeren a great deal. The fact that they left aside Mažuranić could be explained only that he was too much of a Christian to be praised by the marxian critics. Mažuranić saw the meaning of the resistance of the Christian Slavs as their attachment to the eternal values of Christianity, while Njegoš often could be dealt as a reformed Christian, vague and uncertain in his creed. For instance, Mažuranić never would have used such expressions likewise that Njegoš used in asserting that the enemy should be "baptized with water or with blood" which is essential in Njegoš violent crusading spirit when dealing with national and religious enemies of Serbdom. (I mention this remark because one of my listeners came to see me after the lecture and asked further explanation: how to concile such an assertion with the Christian spirit of love? Such contradictions are very often a trait of Njegoš' thinking. He is a rebel in constant rebellion with himself and his Christian faith. He would likely admit even killing in trying to convert or convince his enemy.) The poet of the *Smail-Aga,* Ivan Mažuranić was a Roman Catholic writing for Catholic Croatians, and his interpretation of his creed was organized and ordained into the frame of the western tradition.

Immediately after the war, the traditionalists started again praising Njegoš. A brilliant volume has been written by an eminent Serbian essayist, Mrs. Isidora Sekulić, *The Volume of Deep Devoutness to Njegoš (Knjiga Duboke Odanosti Njegošu,* Srpska Književna Zadruga, Beograd, 1951). Against her and other interpretation of Njegoš came out Milovan Djilas. In his

booklet *The Legend About Njegoš (Legenda o Njegošu,* "Kultura," Beograd, 1952), Mr. Djilas, one of the foremost Marxian theoreticians, opposed the new trend among the writers and intellectuals to glorify the poet of the "Mountain Wreast." Mr. Djilas uses the outmoded Marxian anti-idealistic dialectical approach that has very little to do with the intrinsic philosophical or poetical values of the poet. A staunch monolithic Communist, Mr. Djilas is afraid of Njegoš' idealistic interpretation of the concept of rebellion which could work against the present tyranny as it used to work against all the tyrannies in recent times. This is why Njegoš is not at home with the monolithic totalitarians, but still exercises an overwhelming power with those who see freedom and justice the most essential elements for the survival of mankind.

Another fact will help us to understand Njegoš' situation in present-day Yugoslavia. The world-famous sculptor, Ivan Meštrović, now at the Syracuse University, has been asked by the Montenegrin government to raise a monument to the great Montenegrin poet which should be erected at the Lovchen. While Meštrović conceived the monument as a tribute to freedom and justice, the idea of a new popularity of Njegoš was castigated by the Communist officials who, without saying, see in the fact a new glorification of freedom.

On the contrary, the Slovenian Communists continue to praise Prešeren and keep his memory alive through magnificent editions of his poems, thus expressing the conviction that without Prešeren's opus the Slovenian cultural entity would weaken its personality and independence.

Among many other approaches to Njegoš and Mažuranić, there is one that I feel should not be omitted. In a small booklet written by Dr. Smail Balić, *The Ethical Character of the Bosnian-Herzegovianian Muslims (Etičko naličje bosansko-hercegovačkih Muslimana,* Vienna, 1952), he vindicates the Moslems from what the legacy of Njegoš and Mažuranić has done in

describing them as the symbol of tyranny among the Yugoslavs. Dr. Balić relegates many of those anti-Moslem conceptions to the defunct world of nationalistic-archaic prejudices that have worked against the national and religious harmony among the peoples. Yet, he misses the essential point that while in Njegoš the racial element could have erroneously prevailed in Mažuranić, there was no racial or religious hatred for he was mainly concerned with the concept of tyranny versus freedom, regardless of people who symbolized one or another concept. It is my belief, that if both Njegoš and Mažuranić sung their poems in a different historical period where the Germans, Italians, or the Russians, the Fascists or the Communists, were embodying the spirit of tyranny versus freedom in the Yugoslav lands, they would have used them instead of the Turks or Moslems. Since the Turk or the Moslem was the symbol of enslavement for so many centuries, they located their subject in that frame even if the Turkish tyrants likewise the *Smail-aga Čengjić* were personally correct.

The best example of how the Serbs and the Croats dropped their inimical feeling against the Turks and the Moslems was their sympathetic attitude toward them after the dispersion of the Ottoman Empire when the native tyrants were sometimes more cruel and ruthless than the old Turkish ones, and even the folk poetry nostalgically enhanced the old times of Turkish life, which was in contradistinction with modern times.

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